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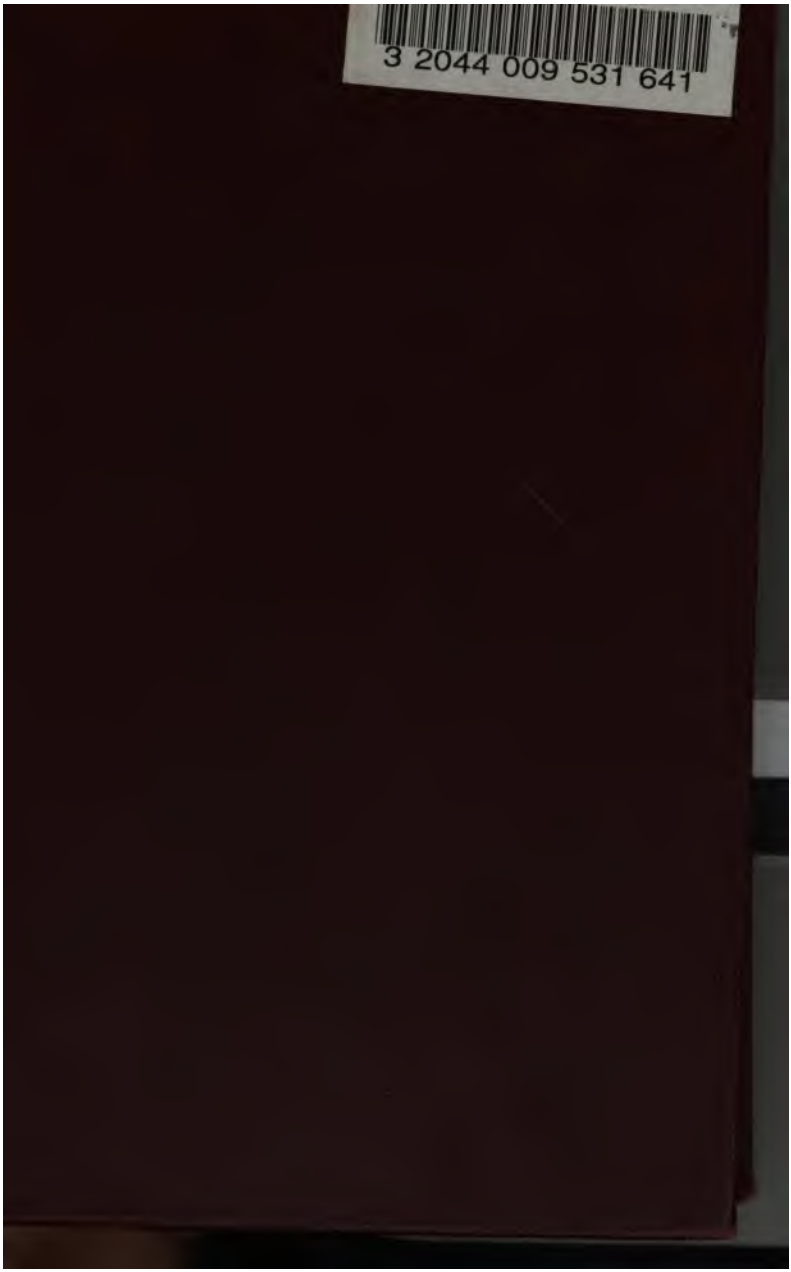
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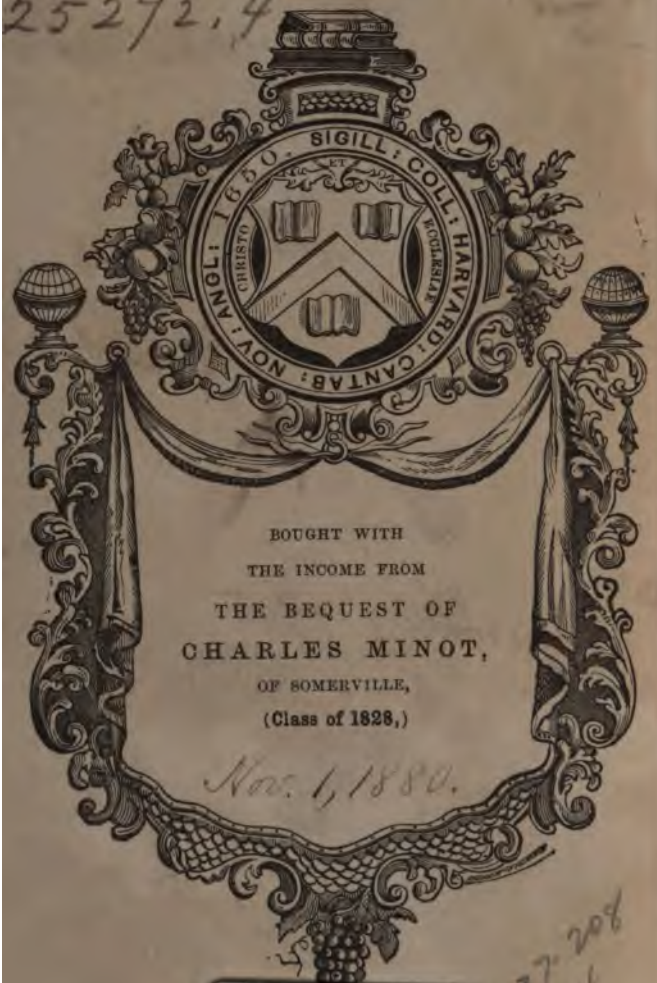

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FROM

"NOTES AND QUERIES."

FOLK LORE.

"..... Of witching rhymes
And evil spirits; of the death-bed call
Of him who robb'd the widow, and devour'd
The orphan's portion; of unquiet souls
Risen from the grave to ease the heavy guilt
Of deeds in life concealed; of shapes that walk
At dead of night and clank their chains, and wave
The torch of Hell around the murderer's bed."

AKENSIDE.

LONDON
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PREFACE.

WHO that remembers the plates of Petrifactions to be found in old works on Natural History, or the heterogeneous fragments which used to be labelled Fossils in our museums, could, from an inspection of them, have ever believed it possible that their study should have resulted in that most important Science which we all now admire for its ingenuity and profoundness — Geology? Who then could have imagined that from a few imperfect bones the genius of an Owen could ever have reproduced the type of the original animal?

Such as were those Petrifactions and those Fossil Remains — such are the scattered fragments of FOLK LORE, contributed originally to the pages of NOTES AND QUERIES, and collected into this little volume. To those who have paid no attention to the subject they may appear little better than the drivellings of antiquated crones, unworthy of the consideration of intelligent men. Yet worthless as they now seem the time will come when some future disciples of

Jacob Grimm shall evolve from them—as Owen from the *disjecta membra* of the old world—a complete system of the ancient mythology of these islands?

In the meanwhile, he who reads them aright will find among them many touches of a loving nature, and no small amount of the poetical element; and there can be little doubt that when the FOLK LORE OF ENGLAND comes to be written, it will owe to the present volume many CHOICE NOTES.

CHOICE NOTES

FROM

"NOTES AND QUERIES."

FOLK LORE.

SITES OF BUILDINGS MYSTERIOUSLY CHANGED.

It may be amusing to the readers of "N. & Q.," and attended with some useful result, to record a few popular traditions respecting the mysterious opposition to the building of certain edifices on the spots originally designed for them by their founders. I will introduce the subject with the local traditions about the building of three churches well known to myself.

1. The church of Breedon, in Leicestershire, stands alone on a high hill, the village being at its foot. The hill is so steep on the side towards the village, that a carriage can only ascend by taking a very circuitous course; and even the footpath winds considerably, and in some parts ascends by steps formed in the turf. The inconvenience of such a situation for the church is obvious, and the stranger, of course, wonders at the folly of those who selected a site for a church which would necessarily preclude the aged and infirm from attending public worship. But the initiated parishioner soon steps forward to enlighten him on the subject, and assures him the pious founder consulted the

convenience of the village, and assigned a central spot for the site of the church. There the foundation was dug, and there the builders began to rear the fabric; but all they built in the course of the day was carried away by *doves* in the night, and skilfully built in the same manner on the hill where the church now stands. Both founder and workmen, awed by this extraordinary interference, agreed to finish the edifice thus begun by doves.

2. The parish church of Wendover, in Buckinghamshire, stands nearly half a mile from the town. The church was to have been placed on a field adjoining the town, and there the building of it was begun; but the materials were all carried away in the night by witches, or, as some relate the tradition, by fairies, and deposited where the church now stands. The field in which the church was to have been built is still called "Witches' Meadow."

3. The parish church of Winwick, Lancashire, stands near that miracle-working spot where St. Oswald, king of the Northumbrians, was killed. The founder had destined a different site for it, but his intention was overruled by a singular personage, whose will he never dreamed of consulting. It must here be noticed that Winwick had then not even received its name; the church, as not uncommon in those days, being one of the earliest erections in the parish. The foundation of the church, then, was laid where the founder had directed, and the close of the first day's labour showed the workmen had not been idle, by the progress made in the building. But the approach of night brought to pass an event which utterly destroyed the repose of the few inhabitants around the spot. A pig was seen running hastily to the site of the new church; and as he ran he was heard to cry or scream aloud "We-ee-wick, We-ee-wick, We-ee-wick!" Then, taking up a stone in his mouth, he carried it to the spot sanctified by the death of St. Oswald, and thus employing himself through the whole night, succeeded in removing all the stones which had been laid by the builders. The founder, feeling himself justly reproved for not having chosen that sacred spot for

the site of his church, unhesitatingly yielded to the wise counsel of the pig. Thus the pig not only decided the site of the church, but gave a name to the parish.

In support of this tradition, there is the figure of a pig sculptured on the tower of the church, just above the western entrance; and also the following Latin doggerel:

> "Hic locus, Oswalde, quondam placuit tibi valde;
> Northanhumbrorum fueras Rex, nuncque Polorum
> Regna tenes, loco passus Marcelde vocato."

May not the phrase "Please the pigs" have originated in the above tradition, since the founder of Winwick Church was obliged to succumb to the pleasure of his porkish majesty?

Instances of equally marvellous changes in the sites of buildings are recorded in Bede, and other monkish writers. Perhaps it would not be difficult to unravel the mystery of such changes. W. H. K.—(Vol. v. p. 436.)

Perhaps W. H. K. may deem the following account of the foundation of Bideford *Bridge* near enough to his purpose:—

"Before whose erection the breadth and roughness of the river was such, as it put many in jeopardy: some were drowned, to the great grief of the inhabitants, who did therefore divers times, and in sundry places, begin to build a bridge; but no firm foundation, after often proof being found, their attempts came to no effect. At which time Sir Richard Gornard was priest of the place, who (as the story of that town hath it) was admonished by a vision in his sleep, to set on the foundation of a bridge near a rock, which he should find rowled from the higher grounds upon the strand. This he esteemed but a dream; yet, to second the same with some art, in the morning he found a huge rock there fixed, whose greatness argued it the work of God; which not only bred admiration, but incited him to set forwards so charitable a work: who eftsoons, with Sir Theobald Grenvile, knight, lord of the land, an especial furtherer and benefactor of that work, founded the bridge there, now to be seen, which for length, and number of arches, equalizeth, if not excelleth, all others in England," &c.—Risdon's *Survey of Devon*, s. v. BIDEFORD.

The traditions *relating* to St. Cuthbert and the foundation

of Durham Cathedral are too well known to find a place in "N. & Q." J. SANSOM.—(Vol. v. 524.)

In the *Traditions of Lancashire*, edited by John Roby, Esq., First Series, vol. i. p. 23., there is a tale entitled *The Goblin Builders*, showing how "Gamel the Saxon Thane, Lord of Recedham or *Rached* (now Rochdale) intended to build a chapel unto St. Chadde, nigh to the banks of the *Rache* or *Roach*." It seems a level, convenient situation was chosen for the edifice; but thrice were the foundations there laid, and thrice were all the building materials conveyed by invisible agency from this flat spot to a more airy and elevated situation. At last the Thane, ceasing to strive against fate, gave up his original design, and the present church was built on the locality designated by these unseen workmen. The ascent was high, and one hundred and twenty-four steps had to be laid to help the natives up to the chapel of St. Chadde. BONSALL.—(Vol. vi. p. 50.)

There are other churches in Lancashire besides Winwick whose sites have been changed by the Devil, and he has also built some bridges; that at Kirkby Lonsdale owes much of its beauty to the string of his apron giving way when he was carrying stones in it. The stones may be seen yet in the picturesque groups of rock below the bridge. Old cross or boundary stones, with a hole full of water, are so common that nobody honours them with a plague story; but we abound in other traditions. According to some a priest, according to others the Devil, stamped his foot into the church wall at Brindle, to prove the truth of Popery; and "George Marsh the Martyr" did the same at Smithells Hall to prove the truth of Protestantism: the footmarks still remain on the wall and the flag. There is unfortunately such a wearisome sameness in these traditions, one story doing for so many different places (except that at Winwick it was as a pig, at Leyland as a cat, somewhere else as a fish, that Satan played his pranks, that any attempt to gather them together for "N. & Q." would only tire out the editor and *all his readers.* —(Vol. vi. p. 71.)

"SNAIL, SNAIL, COME OUT OF YOUR HOLE."

In Surrey, and most probably in other counties where shell-snails abound, children amuse themselves by charming them with a chant to put forth their horns, of which I have only heard the following couplet, which is repeated until it has the desired effect, to the great amusement of the charmer.

"Snail, snail, come out of your hole,
Or else I'll beat you as black as a coal."

It is pleasant to find that this charm is not peculiar to English children, but prevails in places as remote from each other as Naples and Silesia.

The Silesian rhyme is:

"Schnecke, Schnecke, schnürre!
Zeig mir dein viere,
Wenn mir dein viere nicht zeigst,
Schmeisz ich dich in den Graben,
Fressen dich die Raben;"

which may be thus paraphrased:

"Snail, snail, slug-slow,
To me thy four horns show;
If thou dost not show me thy four,
I will throw thee out of the door,
For the crow in the gutter,
To eat for bread and butter."

In that amusing Folk's-book of Neapolitan childish tales, the *Pentamerone* of the noble Count-Palatine Cavalier Giovan-Battista Basile, in the seventeenth tale, entitled "La Palomma," we have a similar rhyme:

"Jesce, jesce, corna;
Ça mammata te scorna,
Te scorna 'ncoppa lastrico,
Che fa lo figlio mascolo."

of which the *sense may* probably be:

"Peer out! Peer out! Put forth your horns!
At you your mother mocks and scorns;
Another son is on the stocks,
And you she scorns, at you she mocks."

S. W. SINGER.—(Vol. iii. p. 132.)

Your correspondent S. W. SINGER has brought to my recollection a verse, which I heard some children singing near Exeter, in July last, and noted down, but afterwards forgot to send to you:—

"Snail, snail, shut out your horns;
Father and mother are dead:
Brother and sister are in the back yard,
Begging for barley bread."

GEO. E. FREERE.

Perhaps it would not be uninteresting to add to the records of the "Snail-charm," that in the south of Ireland also, the same charm, with a more fanciful and less threatening burden, was used amongst us children to win from its reserve the startled and offended snail. We entreated thus:—

"Shell a muddy, shell a muddy,
Put out your horns,
For the king's daughter is
Coming to town
With a red petticoat and a green gown!"

I fear it is impossible to give a clue as to the meaning of the form of invocation, or who was the royal visitor, so nationally clothed, for whose sake the snail was expected to be so gracious. F. J. H.—(Vol. iii. p. 179.)

DUTCH FOLK LORE.

1. A baby laughing in its dreams is conversing with the angels.

2. Rocking the cradle when the babe is not in it, is considered injurious to the infant, and a prognostic of its speedy death.

3. A strange dog following you is a sign of good luck.

4. A stork settling on a house is a harbinger of happiness. To kill such a bird would be sacrilege.

5. If you see a shooting-star, the wish you form before its disappearance will be fulfilled.

6. A person born with a caul is considered fortunate.

7. Four-leaved clover brings luck to the person who finds it unawares.

8. An overturned salt-cellar is a ship wrecked. If a person take salt and spill it on the table, it betokens a strife between him and the person next to whom it fell. To avert the omen, he must lift up the shed grains with a knife, and throw them behind his back.

9. After eating eggs in Holland, you must break the shells, or the witches would sail over in them to England. The English don't know under what obligations they are to the Dutch for this custom. Please to tell them.

10. If you make a present of a knife or scissors, the person receiving must pay something for it; otherwise the friendship between you would be cut off.

11. A tingling ear denotes there is somebody speaking of you behind your back. If you hear the noise in the right one, he praises you; if on the left side, he is calling you a scoundrel, or something like that. But, never mind! for if, in the latter case, you bite your little finger, the evil speaker's tongue will be in the same predicament. By all means don't spare your little finger!

12. If, at a dinner, a person yet unmarried be placed inadvertently between a married couple, be sure he or she will get a partner within the year. It's a pity it must be inadvertently.

13. If a person when rising throw down his chair, he is considered guilty of untruth.

14. A potato begged or stolen is a preservative against rheumatism. Chestnuts have the same efficacy.

15. The Nymphæa, or water-lily, whose broad leaves, and clear white or yellow cups, float upon the water, was esteemed by the old Frisians to have a magical power. "I remember, when a *boy*," says Dr. Halbertsma, "that we

were extremely careful in plucking and handling them; for if any one fell with such a flower in his possession, he became immediately subject to fits."

16. One of my friends cut himself. A man-servant being present secured the knife hastily, anointed it with oil, and putting it into the drawer, besought the patient not to touch it for some days. Whether the cure was effected by this sympathetic means, I can't affirm; but cured it was: so, don't be alarmed.

17. If you feel on a sudden a shivering sensation in your back, there is somebody walking over your future grave.

18. A person speaking by himself will die a violent death.

19. Don't go under a ladder, for if you do you will be hanged.—(Vol. iii. p. 387.) * a ?

Amsterdam.

EXHUMATION OF A BODY OMINOUS TO FAMILY OF THE DECEASED.

In the counties of Leicester and Northampton, and I doubt not in other parts of England, there is a superstitious idea that the removal or exhumation of a body after interment bodes death or some terrible calamity to the surviving members of the deceased's family. Turner, in his *History of Remarkable Providences*, Lond. 1677, p. 77., thus alludes to this superstition: —

"Thomas Fludd of Kent, Esq., told me that it is an old observation which was pressed earnestly to King James I., that he should not remove the Queen of Scots' body from Northamptonshire, where she was beheaded and interred. For that it always bodes ill to the family when bodies are removed from their graves. For some of the family will die shortly after, as did Prince Henry, and I think, Queen Anne."

T. S.—(Vol. ii. p. 4.)

THE CHRISTMAS THORN.

In my neighbourhood (near Bridgewater), the Christmas *thorn blossoms* on the 6th of January (Twelfth Day), and

on this day only. The villagers in whose gardens it grows, and indeed many others, verily believe that this fact pronounces the truth of this being the day of Christ's birth.

S. S. B.—(Vol. iii. p. 367.)

FOLK LORE OF SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

Charming.—There are few villages in this district which are not able to boast a professor of the healing art, in the person of an old woman who pretends to the power of curing diseases by "charming;" and at the present day, in spite of coroners' inquests and parish officers, a belief in the efficacy of these remedies appears to be undiminished. Two preliminaries are given, as necessary to be strictly observed, in order to ensure a perfect cure. First, that the person to be operated upon comes with a full and earnest belief that a cure *will* be effected; and, secondly, that the phrases "please" and "thank you" do not occur during the transaction. The established formula consists in the charmer's crossing the part affected, and whispering over it certain mysterious words—doubtless varied according to the disorder, but the import of which I have never been able to learn; for as there is a very prevalent notion that, if once disclosed, they would immediately lose their virtue, the possessors are generally proof against persuasion or bribery. In some cases it is customary for the charmer to "bless" or hallow cords, or leathern thongs, which are given to the invalids to be worn round the neck. An old woman living at a village near Brackley has acquired a more than ordinary renown for the cure of agues by this means. According to her own account, she received the secret from the dying lips of her mother; who, in her turn, is said to have received it from hers. As this old dame is upwards of ninety, and still refuses to part with her charm, the probability of its perishing with her, forms a constant theme of lamentation among her gossips. It must not be imagined that these ignorant people make a trade of their supposed art. On the contrary, it is believed that any offer of pecuniary *remuneration* would at once break the

spell, and render the charm of no avail: and though it must be admitted that the influence and position naturally accruing to the possessor of such attributes, affords a sufficient motive for imposture, yet I think, for the most part, they may be said to be the dupes of their own credulity, and as fully convinced of their own infallibility as can be the most credulous of their admirers.

The following are a few of the more common traditionary charms (used without having recourse to the charmer) at present current among the rural population of this district.

Warts.—Take one of the large black snails, which are to be found during summer in every hedgerow, rub it over the wart, and then hang it on a thorn. This must be done nine nights successively, at the end of which time the wart will completely disappear. For as the snail, exposed to such cruel treatment, will gradually wither away, so it is believed the wart, being impregnated with its matter, will slowly do the same.

Wens.—After a criminal is dead, but still hanging, his hand must be rubbed thrice over the wen. (Vide *Brand*, vol. iii. p. 153.) Many persons are still living who in their younger days have undergone the ceremony, always, they say, attended with complete success. On execution days at Northampton, numbers of sufferers used to congregate round the gallows, in order to receive the "dead-stroke," as it is termed. At the last execution which took place in that town, a very few only were operated upon, not so much in consequence of decrease of faith, as from the higher fee demanded by the hangman.

Epistaxis.—For stopping or preventing bleeding at the nose, a toad is killed by transfixing it with some sharp-pointed instrument, after which it is inclosed in a little bag and suspended round the neck. The same charm is also occasionally used in cases of fever. The following passage from Sir K. Digby's *Discourse on Sympathy* (Lond. 1658) may enlighten us as to the principle:—

"In time of common contagion, they use to carry about them the *powder of a toad*, and sometimes a living toad or spider shut up in a

box; or else they carry arsnick, or some other venemous substance, which *draws unto it the contagious air*, which otherwise would infect the party." (p. 77.)

Another for the Same.—If it be a man who suffers, he asks a female to buy him a lace, (if a female she asks a man), without either giving money, saying what it is wanted for, or returning thanks when received. The lace so obtained must be worn round the neck for the space of nine days; at the expiration of which, it is said, the patient will experience no return of the disorder.

Cramp.—We still retain such a high sense of the efficacy of the form of the cross, that in case of spasms, or that painful state of the feet in which they are said to "sleep," it is commonly used, under the impression that it mitigates, if not entirely allays, the pain. Warts are also charmed away by crossing them with elder sticks: and a very common charm for the cramp consists in the sufferer's always taking care, when he pulls off his shoes and stockings, to place them in such a position as to form a resemblance to the "holy sign."

Another and very common charm resorted to for the cure of this painful disorder, consists in the wearing about the person the patella of a sheep or lamb, here known as the "cramp-bone." This is worn as near the skin as possible, and at night is laid under the pillow. One instance of a *human* patella being thus used has come under my notice, but I believe this to be by no means common.

Toothache.—Few ailments have more charms for its cure than this. In point of efficacy none are reckoned better than a tooth taken from the mouth of a corpse, which is often enveloped in a little bag, and hung round the neck. A double nut is also sometimes worn in the pocket for the same purpose.

Hooping-cough.—A small quantity of hair is taken from the nape of the child's neck, rolled up in a piece of meat, and given to a dog, in the firm belief that the disease thereby becomes transferred to the animal. A friend informs me that the same charm is well known in Gloucestershire.

Rheumatism. — The right forefoot of a hare, worn constantly in the pocket, is considered a fine amulet against the "rheumatiz."

West. — In order to be rid of the painful tumour on the eyelid, provincially known as the *west* or *sty*, it is customary for the sufferer, on the first night of the new moon, to procure the tail of a black cat, and after pulling from it one hair, rub the tip *nine* times over the pustule. As this has a very cabalistic look, and is moreover frequently attended with sundry severe scratches, a gold ring is found to be a much more harmless substitute; and as it is said to be equally beneficial with the former, it is now more commonly used. This superstition is alluded to by Beaumont and Fletcher, *Mad Lovers*, v. 4.:—

> "——— I have a *sty* here, Chilax.
> *Chi.* I have no gold to cure it, not a penny."

Thorn.— The following word charm is used to prevent a thorn from festering:—

> "Our Saviour was of a virgin born,
> His head was crowned with a crown of thorn;
> It never canker'd nor fester'd at all,
> And I hope in Christ Jesus this never shaull [shall]."

This will remind the reader of the one given by Pepys, vol. ii. p. 415. T. S.—(Vol. ii. p. 36.)

Mice. — A sudden influx of mice into a house, hitherto free from their ravages, denotes approaching mortality among its inhabitants. A mouse running over a person is considered to be an infallible sign of death, as is also the squeaking of one behind the bed of an invalid, or the appearance or apparition of a white mouse running across the room. To meet with a shrew-mouse, in going a journey, is reckoned ominous of evil. The country people have an idea that the harvest-mouse is unable to cross a path which has been trod by man. Whenever they attempt, they are immediately, as my informant expressed it, "struck dead." This, they say, accounts for the numbers *which on* a summer's evening may be found lying dead on

the verge of the field footpaths, without any external wound or apparent cause for their demise.

Snakes. — There is a very prevalent belief that a snake can never die till the sun is down. Cut or hack it as you will, it will never die till sunset. This idea has evidently its source in the amazing vitality common to the species.

Poultry. — The crowing of a hen bodes evil, and is frequently followed by the death of some member of the family. When, therefore, Dame Partlet thus experiments upon the note of her mate, she pays her head as the price of her temerity, a complete severance of the offending member being supposed to be the only way of averting the threatened calamity. No house, it is said, can thrive whose hens are addicted to this kind of amusement. Hence the old proverb often quoted in this district: —

> "A whistling woman and a crowing hen,
> Is neither fit for God nor men."

According to Pluquet, the Normans have a similar belief, and a saying singularly like the English one: —

> "Une poule qui chante le coq, et une fille qui siffle, portent malheur dans la maison."

Before the death of a farmer his poultry frequently go to roost at noon-day, instead of at the usual time. When the cock struts up to the door and sounds his clarion on the threshold, the housewife is warned that she may soon expect a stranger. In what is technically termed "setting a hen," care is taken that the nest be composed of an odd number of eggs. If even, the chickens would not prosper. Each egg is always marked with a little black cross, ostensibly for the purpose of distinguishing them from the others, but also supposed to be instrumental in producing good chickens, and preventing any attack from the weasel or other farmyard marauders. The last egg the hen lays is carefully preserved, its possession being supposed to operate as a charm upon the well-doing of the poultry. In some cases, though less commonly, the one laid on Good Friday is preserved, from the same reason. When a baby is first taken

out to see its friends, it is customary for them to give it an egg: this, if preserved, is held to be a source of good fortune to the future man. (Vide *Brand*, ii. p. 48.) The first egg laid by a pullet is usually secured by the shepherd in order to present to his sweetheart, — the luckiest gift, it is believed, he can give her.

Crows. — To see a crow flying alone is a token of bad luck. An odd one, perched in the path of the observer, is a sign of wrath.

Owls. — The ominous screech of this, the most ominous of all birds, is still heard with alarm; and he remains with us, as in Chaucer's days,

> "The oule eke that of deth the bode bringeth."

When, as sometimes happens, he exchanges the darkness of his ivy bush for the rays of the sun at noon-day, his presence is looked upon as indicative of bad luck to the beholder. Hence it not infrequently happens that a mortal is as much scared by one of these occasional flights as the small bird denizens of the tree on which he may happen to alight.

Cuckoos. — When the cry of the cuckoo is heard for the first time in the season, it is customary to turn the money in the pocket and wish. If within the bounds of reason, it is sure to be fulfilled. In reference to the pecuniary idea respecting the cuckoo, the children sing,—

> "Cuckoo, cuckoo, cherry tree,
> Catch a penny and give it to me."

Robins and Wrens. — The robin is considered a sacred bird: to kill one is little less than sacrilege, and its eggs are free from the destroying hand of the bird-nester. It is asserted that the respect shown to it by man is joined in by the animals of the wood. The weasel and wild cat, it is said, will neither molest it, nor eat it when killed. The high favour in which this bird is held is usually attributed to the ballad of *The Babes in the Wood.* Few, however, among the peasantry of this district have even heard of that beautiful *tale; and,* however much that Legend may have tended to

popularise the belief, it is evident that we must trace the origin to a more remote source. One cause for the veneration in which it is held may be the superstition which represents him as the medium through which mankind are warned of approaching death. Before the death of a person, a robin is believed, in many instances, to tap thrice at the window of the room in which he or she may be. The wren is also a bird which superstition protects from injury; but it is by no means treated with such reverence as the robin. The praises of both are sung in the old couplet: —

> "The robin and the wren,
> Be God A'mighty's cock and hen.'

Pigeons. — No one, it is believed, can die on pigeons' feathers. In the northern parts of the county, the same thing is said of game feathers, — a superstition also current in Kent. — *Ingoldsby Legends*, Third Series, p. 133.

Wasps. — The first wasp seen in the season should always be killed. By so doing you secure to yourself good luck and freedom from enemies throughout the year.

Bees. — The superstitious ceremonies and observances attached to these animals appear to be current throughout the kingdom, and by no means suffer any diminution in this county. Among others of less common occurrence, we have the belief that they will not thrive in a quarrelsome family.

The wild, or, as we term him, the *humble bee*, is not without a share of the superstitions which pertain to his more civilised brethren. The entrance of one into a cottage is deemed a certain sign of death.

Spiders. — The small spiders called "money spinners" prognosticate good luck; in order to propitiate which, they must be thrown over the left shoulder.

T. Y. (Vol. ii. p. 164.)

Hedgehog. — Among other animals looked upon in a superstitious light, we have the hedgehog, who, in addition to his still credited attribute of sucking cows, is looked upon by our rustics as the emblem of craft and cunning;

playing the same part in our popular stories as Reynard in the more southern *fabliaux*. They tell concerning him, the legend given by M.M. Grimm, of the race between the Hare and Hedgehog. The Northamptonshire version makes the trial of speed between a *fox* and hedgehog. In all other respects the English tale runs word for word with the German.

Hares. — Besides the ancient superstition attached to the crossing of the path by one of these animals, there is also a belief that the running of one along the street or mainway of a village portends fire to some house in the immediate vicinity.

Toads. — Belief in their venomous nature is yet far from being extinct. This, added to the ill-defined species of fascination which they are supposed to exercise, has caused them here, as elsewhere, to be held in great abhorrence. I have heard persons who ought to have known better, exclaim on the danger of gazing upon one of the harmless reptiles. The idea respecting the fascinating powers of the toad, is by no means confined to our district. Witness the learned Cardan:

"Fascinari pueros fixo intuitu magnorum bufonum et maximè qui è subterraneo specu aut sepulchris prodierint, utque ob id occulto morbo perire, haud absurdum est." — *De Rerum Varietate*, lib. xvi. c. 90.

Crickets, contrary to the idea prevailing in the western counties, are supposed to presage good luck, and are therefore most carefully preserved. Their presence is believed to be a sure omen of prosperity; while, on the other hand, their sudden departure from a hearth which has long echoed with their cry, betokens approaching misfortune, and is regarded as the direst calamity that can happen to the family.

Magpies. — To see one magpie alone bodes bad luck; two, good luck; three, a "berrin;" four, a wedding. This is our version of the saying: Grose gives it differently.

Spiders. — When a spider is found upon your clothes, or

about your person, it signifies that you will shortly receive some money. Old Fuller, who was a native of Northamptonshire, thus quaintly moralises this superstition:

"When a spider is found upon our clothes, we used to say, some money is coming towards us. The moral is this: such who imitate the industry of that contemptible creature may, by God's blessing, weave themselves into wealth and procure a plentiful estate."—*Worthies*, p. 58. Pt. 2. ed. 1662.

Omens of death and misfortune are also drawn from the howling of dogs — the sight of a trio of butterflies — the flying down the chimney of swallows or jackdaws; and swine are sometimes said to give their master warning of his death by giving utterance to a certain peculiar whine, known and understood only by the initiated in such matters. Gaule, in his *Mag-astromancers Posed and Puzzled*, Lond. 1652, p. 181., ranks among evil omens "the falling of swallows down the chimney" and the "grunting of swine."

T. S. (Vol. iii. p. 3.)

There is a singular custom prevailing in some parts of Northamptonshire, and perhaps some of your correspondents may be able to mention other places where a similar practice exists. If a female is afflicted with fits, nine pieces of silver money, and nine three halfpences, are collected from nine bachelors: the silver money is converted into a ring to be worn by the afflicted person, and the three halfpences (*i.e.* 13½d.) are paid to the maker of the ring, an inadequate remuneration for his labours, but which he goodnaturedly accepts. If the afflicted person be a male, the contributions are levied upon females. F. H.—(Vol. viii. p. 146.)

STONE COFFIN AND THE GOBLINS.

On visiting a farm called Cortiallock or Carallock in St. Cleer, I saw in the courtyard a very heavy granite coffin, which the owner told me his father had purchased at Rosecradock for a trough, for which purpose it is now serving. The block of moorstone is externally irregular in shape: the hollow is six feet one inch, by one foot four at the head,

one foot nine at the breast, and nine inches at the foot; the depth is ten inches at the foot, and seven inches at the head.

Upon the stout yeoman purchasing the sarcophagus, he sent his team of oxen and horses to draw it home, which after much labour was accomplished; and the receptacle of former greatness was placed so as to accommodate the swinish herd in the farm-yard. After the toils of the day, the family retired to rest. About midnight a peculiar scratching noise below awakened them all; they assemble at the stair-head in fear, and conclude that "the spirits" had come to take the coffin back to Rosecradock, to restore it to its proper resting-place. In considerable awe they wait until dawn, when the maid-servant first ventures down into the dairy; outside which *was*, the evening before, the coffin. She sees a cat sitting outside the window-sill, and vainly endeavouring to reach its paw through the apertures in the wire-work, in order to reach some tempting giblets hung up close to the window place. Puss constantly scratched the wires, in her ineffectual though desperate attempts. Outside lay the coffin in ponderous immovability: and as the cat jumped down on it, and Joan removed the giblets, the spirits departed, and have never troubled the town-place of Carallock since. S. R. P.—(Vol. vi. p. 600.)

MAY-DEW.

Every one has heard of the virtues of "May-dew," but perhaps the complex superstition following may be less generally known. A respectable tradesman's wife in this town (Launceston) tells me that the poor people here say that a swelling in the neck may be cured by the patient's going *before sunrise*, on the 1st of May, to the grave of the last young man who has been buried in the churchyard, and applying the dew, gathered by passing the hand *three times* from the head to the foot of the grave, to the part affected by the ailment.* This was told me yesterday in reply to a

* *If the patient* be a woman, the grave chosen must be that of the

question, whether the custom of gathering "May-dew" is still prevailing here. I may as well add, that the common notion of improving the complexion by washing the face with the early dew in the fields on the 1st of May extensively prevails in these parts; and they say that a child who is weak in the back may be cured by drawing him over the grass wet with the morning dew. The experiment must be thrice performed, that is, on the mornings of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of May. I find no allusion to these specific applications of "May-dew" in Ellis's *Brand.*

H. G. T.—(Vol. ii. p. 474.)

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE MIDLAND COUNTIES.

It is believed a sign of "bad luck" to meet a white horse, unless the person *spits* at it; which action is said to avert the ill consequences of the rencontre.

A rainy Friday is believed to be followed, as a natural and invariable consequence, by a wet Sunday; but I am not aware that the contrary is believed, viz., that a fine Friday produces a fine Sunday.

If the fire burns brightly when a person has poked or stirred it up, it is a sign that the *absent* lover, wife, or husband (as the case may be) is in good spirits, and in good humour.

The itching of the right hand palm is said to portend the reception of a gift; which is rendered more certain if the advice in this distich be followed:—

> "Rub it 'gainst wood,
> 'Tis sure to come good."

Persons with much hair or down upon their arms and hands, will at some future period enjoy great wealth; or, as the common expression has it, "are born to be rich."

HENRY KERSLEY.—(Vol. i. p. 451.)

Corp. Chris. Hall, Maidstone.

last young man buried, and that of the last young woman in the case of a man patient.

OMENS FROM CATTLE.

I forward to you a *Note*, which, many years ago, I inserted in my interleaved Brand's *Observations on Popular Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 519. 4to., in the hope that, as the subject interested me *then*, it may not prove uninteresting to some *now*:—

"A bad omen seems to be drawn from *an ox or cow breaking into a garden*. Though I laugh at the superstition, the omen was painfully fulfilled in my case.

"About the middle of March, 1843, some cattle were driven close to my house; and, the back door being open, *three* got into our little bit of garden, and trampled it. When our school-drudge came in the afternoon, and asked the cause of the confusion, she expressed great sorrow and apprehension on being told — said it was a bad sign —and that we should hear of *three* deaths within the next six months. Alas! in April, we heard of dear J——'s murder; a fortnight after A——- died; and to-morrow, August 10th, I am to attend the funeral of my excellent son-in-law.

"I have just heard of the same omen from another quarter."

This was added the next day;—

"But what is still more remarkable is, that when I went down to Mr. ——'s burial, and was mentioning the superstition, they told me that, while he was lying ill, a cow got into the front garden, and was driven out with great difficulty."

L. S.—(Vol. i. p. 258.)

BOY OR GIRL.

The following mode was adopted a few years ago in a branch of my family residing in Denbighshire, with the view of discovering the sex of an infant previous to its birth. As I do not remember to have met with it in other localities, it may, perhaps, be an interesting addition to your "Folk Lore." An old woman of the village, strongly attached to the family, asked permission to use a harmless charm to learn if the expected infant would be male or female. Accordingly she joined the servants at their supper, where she assisted in clearing a shoulder of mutton *of every particle of* meat. She then held the blade-bone to

the fire until it was scorched, so as to permit her to force her thumbs through the thin part. Through the holes thus made she passed a string, and having knotted the ends together, she drove in a nail over the back door and left the house, giving strict injunctions to the servants to hang the bone up in that place the last thing at night. Then they were carefully to observe who should first enter that door on the following morning, exclusive of the members of the household, and the sex of the child would be that of the first comer. This rather vexed some of the servants, who wished for a boy, as two or three women came regularly each morning to the house, and a man was scarcely ever seen there; but to their delight the first comer on this occasion proved to be a man, and in a few weeks the old woman's reputation was established throughout the neighbourhood by the birth of a boy. M. E. F.—(Vol. ii. p. 20.)

CURE FOR SCARLET FEVER.

The Irish, when any one has been attacked with scarlet fever, are accustomed to cut off some of the hair of the sick man, which they put down the throat of an ass. By this means the disease is supposed to be charmed away from the patient, and to attack the ass instead.

F. M. M.—(Vol. vi. p. 600.)

NIGHT RAINS.

I was lately in East Anglia, in the neighbourhood of the breach, called locally the "Gull," made by the late floods in the Ouse, which laid many thousand acres of the fens under water. Of course nothing else was talked of at the time but the inundation, and the probable extent of the damage it would cause. I heard some gentlemen remark, that they had heard from an old woman a saying, common in her youth, but which no one remembered to have heard before, which had been singularly true of the late autumn. She recalled the old rhyme,

" Night rains,
Make drown'd fens: "

and it was observed that it had certainly been the case that the greater part of the excessive quantity of rain which fell in the last quarter of 1852 had fallen at night.

E. A. J.—(Vol. i. p. 601.)

EATING SNAKES A CHARM FOR GROWING YOUNG.

I send you the following illustrations of this curious receipt for growing young. Perhaps some of your correspondents will furnish me with some others, and some additional light on the subject. Fuller says,—

" A gentlewoman told an ancient batchelour, who looked very *young*, that she thought *he had eaten a snake*: 'No, mistris,' (said he), 'it is because I never meddled with any snakes which maketh me look so young.'" — *Holy State*, 1642, p. 36.

" He hath left off o' late to *feed on snakes*;
His beard's turned white again."
Massinger, Old Law, Act v. Sc. 1.

" He is your loving brother, sir, and will tell nobody
But all he meets, that you have eat a *snake*,
And are grown *young*, gamesome, and rampant."
Ibid, Elder Brother, Act iv. Sc. 4.

JARLTZBERG.—(Vol. ii. p. 130.)

CHARM FOR THE CURE OF THE KING'S EVIL.

The following curious and cruel charm for the cure of the king's evil, is extracted from a very quaint old work by William Ellis, farmer of Little Gaddesden, near Hempstead, Herts, published at Salisbury in 1750: —

" A girl at Gaddesden, having the evil in her Feet from her Infancy, at eleven years old lost one of her toes by it, and was so bad that she could hardly walk, therefore was to be sent to a London Hospital in a little time. But a Beggar woman coming to the Door and hearing of it, said, that if they would cut off the hind leg, and the fore leg on the contrary side of that, of a toad, and she wear them in a silken bag about her neck, it would certainly cure her; but *it was to be observed*, that on the toad's losing its legs, it was to be

turned loose abroad, and as it pined, wasted, and died, the distemper would likewise waste and die; which happened accordingly, for the girl was entirely cured by it, never having had the evil afterwards. Another Gaddesden girl having the evil in her eyes, her parents dried a toad in the sun, and put it in a silken bag, which they hung on the back part of her neck; and although it was thus dried, it drawed so much as to raise little blisters, but did the girl a great deal of service, till she carelessly lost it."

DAVID STEVENS.—(Vol. ii. p. 68.)

Godalming.

"TRASH" OR "SKRIKER."

Many hundreds of persons, in the neighbourhood of Burnley, place implicit credence in the reality of the appearance of a death sign, locally termed *trash* or *skriker*. It has the appearance of a large black dog, with long shaggy hair and, as the natives express it, "eyes as big as saucers." The first name is given to it from the peculiar noise made by its feet when passing along, resembling that of a heavy shoe in a miry road. The second appellation is in allusion to the sound of its voice when *heard* by those parties who are unable to *see* the appearance itself. According to the statements of parties who have seen the *trash* frequently, it makes its appearance to some member of that family from which death will shortly select his victim; and, at other times, to some very intimate acquaintance. Should any one be so courageous as to follow the appearance, it usually makes its retreat with its eyes *fronting* the pursuer, and either sinks into the earth with a *strange noise*, or is lost upon the slightest momentary inattention. Many have attempted to strike it with any weapon they had at hand; but although the appearance stood its ground, no *material* substance could ever be detected. It may be added that "trash" does not confine itself to churchyards, though frequently seen in such localities.

T. T. W.—(Vol. ii. p. 51.)

ASH SAP.

The reason for giving ash sap to new-born children in the Highlands of Scotland is, first, because it acts as a powerful astringent, and, secondly, because the ash, in common with the rowan, is supposed to possess the property of resisting the attacks of witches, fairies, and other imps of darkness. Without some precaution of this kind, they would change the child, or possibly steal it away altogether. The herd boys in the district of Buchan, in Aberdeenshire, always prefer a herding stick of ash to any other wood, as in throwing it at their cattle, it is *sure* not to strike on a vital part, and so kill or injure the animal, which they say a stick of any other wood *might* do.

"Rowan, ash, and red thread,
Keep the devils frae their speed."

It is a common practice with the housewives in the same district, to tie a piece of red worsted thread round their cows' tails, previous to turning them out to grass for the first time in the spring. It secures their cattle they say, from an evil eye, from being elf-shot by fairies, &c. &c.

ABERDONIENSIS.—(Vol. iv. p. 380.)

LAYING A GHOST.

Frequent mention is made of the laying of ghosts, and in many localities the tradition of such an event is extant. At Cumnor, Lady Dudley (Amy Robsart's) ghost is said to have been laid by nine Oxford parsons, and the tradition is still preserved by the villagers; but nowhere have I been able to ascertain what was the ceremony on such an occasion.

A. D. B.—(Vol. ii. p. 404.)

FUNERAL SUPERSTITION.

A few days ago the body of a gentleman in this neighbourhood (Sheffield) was conveyed to the hearse, and while being

placed in it, the door of the house, whether from design or inadvertence I know not, was closed before the friends came out to take their places in the coaches. An old lady, who was watching the proceedings, immediately exclaimed "God bless me! they have closed the door upon the corpse: there will be another death in that house before many days are over." She was fully impressed with this belief, and unhappily this impression has been confirmed. The funeral was on Saturday, and on the Monday morning following a young man, resident in the house, was found dead in bed, having died under the influence of chloroform, which he had inhaled, self-administered, to relieve the pain of tooth-ache or tic-douloureux. H. J.—(Vol. ii. p. 259.)

CHILDREN CRYING AT BAPTISM.

I have often heard that it was lucky for infants to cry at the time when they were baptized, but have only lately been informed of the reason, which is, that if they are quiet and good then, it seems to show that they are too good to live.

W. Fraser.—(Vol. vi. p. 601.)

BAPTISMAL SUPERSTITION.

In the north of England, when several children are brought to be baptized at the same time, great anxiety is shown by the people lest the girls should take the precedence of the boys; in which case it is believed the latter, when arrived at man's estate, would be beardless.

E. H. A.—(Vol. ii. p. 197.)

CONFIRMATION SUPERSTITION.

Similar to the above superstition is the desire to have the bishop's *right hand*—at confirmation the right hand being thought lucky, the left unlucky—in Devonshire.

G. T.—(Vol. vi. p. 601.)

Exeter.

TEETH WIDE APART A SIGN OF GOOD LUCK.

A young lady the other day, in reply to an observation of mine, "What a lucky girl you are!" replied, "So they used to say I should be when at school." "Why?" "Because my teeth were set so far apart; it was a sure sign I should be lucky and travel."

A. D.—(Vol. vi. p. 601.)

NORTHUMBERLAND TRADITION.

Joaney or Johnny Reed, the parish clerk of a village near Newcastle, was returning home one evening, and in passing a gate by the roadside marvelled much to see nine cats about it. His wonder was changed to horror when one of the cats addressed him, "Joaney Reed, Joaney Reed, tell Dan Ratcliffe that Peg Powson is dead." Joaney hurried home to his wife, and instantly informed her of the circumstance, wondering at the same time who Dan Ratcliffe might be; when up sprang the cat from the hearth, and exclaiming "If Peg Powson's dead, it's no time for me to be here," rushed out of the house and was seen no more.

P. P.—(Vol. vi. p. 70.)

ISLE OF MAN FOLK LORE.

A young person from Castletown tells me as follows:—

A woman walking over Barrule met two fairy armies going to battle, which was to begin on the ringing of a bell; she pulled the bell, and in consequence both armies attacked her, and kept her prisoner for three years, when she escaped.

A little girl, walking over a bridge, was offered by three little men (one after the other) a farthing, which she persevered in refusing; knowing that, if accepted, she would have been carried off.

A labouring man, passing by a house which is said to be haunted by soldiers, saw a soldier from Castletown sitting *on a stile;* and, on going up to tell him that the bugle had

sounded, the soldier vanished into air, and the man saw a ball of fire before him all the way home.

A white lady walked through a room one evening when the doors were bolted and barred, and could not be found anywhere; a murder was once committed in a room of this house, and, although the boards have been moved, blood will come again.

At Peel, a witch with a basin of water said that the herring fleet would never return; every ship was lost, and she was put in a barrel with spikes, and rolled down the hill, the grass never having grown since; "and I saw the mark all down."

Women are turned into hares, and can only be shot with a silver sixpence.

A white lady was seen every night after dark; and one night, when all were in bed, a servant heard a knock at the door, put her head out of window, and saw a little doll hop round the house and knock three times; she was so frightened that she could not get her head in, till others pulled her. The house was then suddenly illuminated, and, when quite dark again, the bedclothes pulled off.

The fairies are seen to hop from trees: a man took one home for a doll, and became very ill; but on the advice of a woman, he returned it where found, and then quite recovered.

Fairies change children; a woman had one for eighteen years, and could not make it walk or speak. A woman, shearing corn, laid her child down; a man saw a fairy come and change it: the fairy-child screamed, and the woman, going to take it up, was prevented by the man. The fairy seeing that no one touched it, returned the woman's child.

People are pulled off horses by black dogs. Three stone coffins were lately dug up, and the place not since haunted.

Our woman servant told me that her father (who used to drink), and others, chased a black dog, which kept howling and screaming round the town, up as far as the gallows post; but did not dare to go beyond, and came back as fast as they could.

A tradesman told me that lying on a sofa at an inn, a white lady whispered and told him where some money was to be found; he fell off the sofa, was ill for six months, and has been lame ever since. The owner of the house would give him half if he tells; but he will not tell, or the white lady would haunt him.

They say that fairies are the fallen angels.

A. C.—(Vol. v. p. 341.)

SIR THOMAS BOLEYN'S SPECTRE.

Sir Thomas Boleyn, the father of the unfortunate Queen of Henry VIII., resided at Blickling, distant about fourteen miles from Norwich, and now the residence of the dowager Lady Suffield. The spectre of this gentleman is believed by the vulgar to be doomed, annually, on a certain night in the year, to drive, for a period of one thousand years, a coach drawn by four headless horses, over a circuit of twelve bridges in that vicinity. These are Aylsham, Burgh, Oxnead, Buxton, Coltishall, the two Meyton bridges, Wroxham, and four others. Sir Thomas carries his head under his arm, and flames issue from his mouth. Few rustics are hardy enough to be found loitering on or near those bridges on that night; and my informant averred, that he was himself on one occasion hailed by this fiendish apparition, and asked to open a gate, but "he warn't sich a fool as to turn his head; and well a' didn't, for Sir Thomas passed him full gallop like:" and he heard a voice which told him that he (Sir Thomas) had no power to hurt such as turned a deaf ear to his requests, but that had he stopped he would have carried him off.

This tradition I have repeatedly heard in this neighbourhood from aged persons when I was a child, but I never found but one person who had ever actually *seen* the phantom. Perhaps some of your correspondents can give some clue to this extraordinary sentence. The coach and four horses is attached to another tradition I have heard in the west of Norfolk; where the ancestor of a family is re-

ported to drive his spectral team through the old walled-up gateway of his now demolished mansion, on the anniversary of his death: and it is said that the bricks next morning have ever been found loosened and fallen, though as constantly repaired. Another vision of Headless Horse is prevalent at Caistor Castle, the seat of the Fastolfs.

E. S. T. — (Vol. i. p. 468.)

FOLK LORE OF WALES.

Merry Lwyd. — A custom prevails in Wales of carrying about at Christmas time a horse's skull dressed up with ribbons, and supported on a pole by a man who is concealed under a large white cloth. There is a contrivance for opening and shutting the jaws, and the figure pursues and bites every body it can lay hold of, and does not release them except on payment of a fine. It is generally accompanied by some men dressed up in a grotesque manner, who, on reaching a house sing some extempore verses requesting admittance, and are in turn answered by those within, until one party or the other is at a loss for a reply. The Welsh are undoubtedly a poetical people, and these verses often display a good deal of cleverness. This horse's head is called *Mari Lwyd*, which I have heard translated "grey mare." *Llwyd* certainly is grey, but *Mari* is not a mare, in Welsh. I think I have heard that there is some connection between it and the camel which often appears in old pictures of the Magi offering their gifts. Can any of your readers inform me of the real meaning of the name, and the origin of the custom, and also whether a similar custom does not prevail in some parts of Oxfordshire? PWCCA.—(Vol. i. p. 173.)

I believe that all these mummings may be traced to the disguisings which formed so popular an amusement in the Middle Ages, and that the name applied in Wales to this remnant of our ancient pastimes is nothing more than a compound of our English adjective "merry" and a corruption of the Latin word "Ludi," which these masquings were formerly termed.

Strutt, in his *Sports and Pastimes*, Book iii. chap. 13.,

speaks of Christmas Spectacles in the time of Edward III., as known by the name of Ludi; and in Warton's *History of English Poetry*, it is said of these representations that "by the ridiculous and exaggerated oddity of the Vizors, and by the singularity and splendour of the dresses, every thing was out of nature and propriety." In Strutt's 16th Plate, specimens will be found of the whimsical habit and attire in which the mummers were wont to appear.

My impression that the Merry-Lwyd was by no means a diversion exclusively Welsh is corroborated by the fact noticed in your Number of the 23rd of Feb., of its being found to exist in Cheshire. And we know that many ancient customs lingered in the principality long after they fell into disuse in England.

GWYNN AB NUDD.—(Vol i. p. 315.)

Glamorganshire, March 1, 1850.

Cron Annwn.—When a storm sounds over the mountains, the Welsh peasant will tell you that his ear discerns the howl of the *Cron Annwn* mingling with that of the wind, yet as clearly distinct from it as is the atmosphere in a diving-bell from that of the surrounding waters. These dogs of Annwn, or "couriers of the air," are spirit hounds, who hunt the souls of the dead; or, as occasionally said, they foretell, by their expectant cries, the approaching death of some man of evil deeds. Few have ever pretended to see them; for few, we presume, would linger until they dawned on the sight; but they are described by Taliesin, and in the *Mabinogion*, as being of a clear shining white, with red ears; colouring which confirms the author of the *Mythology of the Ancient Druids* in the idea that these dogs were "a mystical transformation of the Druids, with their white robes and red tiaras." Popular superstition, however, which must always attribute ugliness to an object of fear, deems that they are either jet black, with eyes and teeth of fire, or of a deep red, and dripping all over with gore. "The nearer," says the Rev. Edmund Jones, "they are to a man, the *less* their voice is, and the farther the louder, sometimes swelling like the voice *of a great hound*, or a blood-hound."

They are *sometimes* accompanied by a female fiend, called *Malt y nos*—Matilda or Malen of the night, a somewhat ubiquitous character, with whom we meet under a complication of names and forms.

Jones of Brecon, who tells us that the cry of the Cron Annwn is as familiar to the inhabitants of Ystrad Fellte and Pont Neath-vaughan [in Glamorganshire] as the watchman's rattle in the purlieus of Covent Garden—for he lived in the days when watchmen and their rattles were yet among the things of this world—considers that to these dogs, and not to a Greek myth, may be referred the hounds, *Fury*, *Silver*, *Tyrant*, &c., with which Prospero hunts his enemies "soundly," in the *Tempest*. And they must recall to the minds of our readers the *wish*, *wisked*, or *Yesk* hounds of Devon, which are described in the *Athenæum* for March 27. 1847, as well as the *Maisne Hellequin* of Normandy and Bretagne.

There has been much discussion respecting the signification of the word *Annwn*, which has been increased by the very frequent mistake of writing it *Anwn*, which means, *unknown*, *strange*, and is applied to the people who dwell in the antipodes of the speaker: while *Annwn* is an adaptation of *annwfn*, a *bottomless* or *immeasurable pit*, *voidless space*, and also Hell. Thus we find, that when *Pwyl*, or *Reason*, drives these dogs off their track, the owner comes up, and, reproving him, declares that he is a crowned king, Lord of Annwn and Pendaran, *i. e.* chief of thunder. (See *Myth. Ant. Druids*, p. 418.)

This Prince of Darkness is supposed to be the spouse of Andraste, now corrupted into Andras, and equivalent with *Malt y nos*, the Diana or Hecate of the ancient Britons.

These dogs sometimes appear singly, on which occasions they sit by the side of a stream, howling in so unearthly a manner, that the hapless man who finds one in his path usually loses his senses. This seems to have a connection with the "Mauthe Doog" of the Isle of Man; but the tradition is not, we suspect, genuine.

Cyoeraeth or Gwrach-y-rhybin.—Another instance of the

grand, though gloomy superstitions of the Cymry, is that of the *Cyoeraeth*, or hag of the mist, an awful being who is supposed to reside in the mountain fog, through which her supernatural shriek is frequently heard. She is believed to be the very personification of ugliness, with torn and dishevelled hair, long black teeth, lank and withered arms and claws, and a most cadaverous appearance; to this some add, wings of a leathery and bat-like substance.

The name *Cy-oer-ueth*, the last two syllables of which signify *cold-grief*, is most descriptive of the sad wail which she utters, and which will, it is said literally freeze the veins of those hear it; she is *rarely* seen, but is heard at a cross road, or beside a stream—in the latter case she splashes the water with her hands—uttering her lamentation, as if in allusion to the relatives of those about to die. Thus if a man hears her cry *fy nqwsaig*, *fy nqwsaig*, &c., his wife will surely die, and he will be heard to moan in the same strain ere long; and so on with other cases. The cadence of this cry can never be properly caught by any one who has not heard, if not a Cyoeraeth, at least a native of Wales repeat the strain. When merely an inarticulate scream is heard, it is probable that the hearer himself is the one whose death is fore-mourned.

Sometimes she is supposed to come like the Irish *banshee*, in a dark mist, to the windows of those who have been long ill; when flapping her wings against the pane, she repeats their names with the same prolonged emphasis; and then it is thought that they must die.

It is this hag who forms the torrent beds which seam the mountain side; for she gathers great stones in her cloak to make her ballast, when she flies upon the storm; and when about to retire to her mountain cave, she lets them drop progressively as she moves onwards, when they fall with such an unearthly weight that they lay open the rocky sides of the mountain.

In some parts of South Wales this hag of the mist either loses her sway, or divides it with a more dignified *personage*, who, in the form of an old man, and under the

name of *Brenhin Llwyd*, the *grey king*, sits ever silent in the mist.

Any one who has witnessed the gathering and downward rolling of a genuine mountain fog must fully appreciate the spirit in which men first peopled the clouds with such supernatural beings as those above described; or with those which dimly, yet constantly, pervade the much-admired *Legend of Montrose*.

Meddygon Myddvai.—On the heights of the Black Mountains, in Caermarthenshire, lies a dark-watered lake, known by the name of *Lyn y Van Vach*. As might be predicated, from the wild grandeur of its situation, as well as from the ever-changing hues which it takes from the mountain shadows, many a superstition — gloomy or beautiful — is connected with its history. Amongst these may be reckoned the legend of the *Meddygon Myddvai*, or "surgeons of Myddvai." Tradition affirms that "once upon a time" a man who dwelt in the parish of Myddvai led his lambs to graze on the borders of this lake; a proceeding which he was induced to repeat in consequence of his visits being celebrated by the appearance of three most beautiful nymphs, who, rising from the waters of the lake, frequently came on shore, and wandered about amongst his flock. On his endeavouring, however, to catch or retain these nymphs, they fled to the lake and sank into its depths, singing —

"Cras dy fara,
Anhawdd ein dala!"

which may be rendered [eater of] "hard-baked bread, it is difficult to retain us!" Difficulties, however, but increased the determination of the shepherd; and day after day he watched beside the haunted lake, until at length his perseverance was rewarded by the discovery of a substance resembling unbaked bread, which floated on the water: this he fished up and ate, and on the following day he succeeded in capturing the nymphs: on which he requested one of them to become his wife; to this she consented, on condition that he should be able to distinguish her from her sisters on the following day. This was no easy task, as the

nymphs bore the most striking resemblance to each other; but the lover noticed some trifling peculiarity in the dress of his choice, by means of which he identified her. She then assured him that she would be to him as good a wife as any *earthly* maiden could be, until he should strike her three times without a cause. This was deemed by the shepherd an impossible contingency, and he led his bride in triumph from the mountain; followed by seven cows, two oxen, and one bull, which she had summoned from the waters of the lake to enrich her future home.

Many years passed happily on, and three smiling children — afterwards the "surgeons of Myddvai" — blessed the shepherd and his Undine-like bride; but at length, on requesting her to go to the field and catch his horse, she replied that she would do so presently; when striking her arm three times, he exclaimed, *Dôs, dôs, dôs;* Go, go, go. This was more than a free dweller in the waters could brook; so calling her ten head of cattle to follow her, she fled to the lake, and once more plunged beneath its waters.

Such is the legend; of which reason vainly expresses its disbelief, as long as the eye of faith can discern physical proofs of its truth in the deep furrow which, crossing the mountain in detached portions, terminates abruptly in the lake; for it seems that when the two oxen were summoned by their mistress, they were ploughing in the field; and at their departure, they carried the plough with them, and dragged it into the lake.

The nymph once more appeared upon the earth; for as her sons grew to manhood, she met them one day in a place which, from this circumstance, received the name of *Cwm Meddygon*, and delivered to each of them a bag, containing such mysterious revelations in the science of medicine, that they became greater in the art than were ever any before them.

Though so curiously connected with this fable, the "surgeons of Myddvai" are supposed to be historical personages, who, according to a writer in the *Cambro-Briton*, flourished in the thirteenth century, and left behind them a MS. treatise on their practice, of which several fragments *and imperfect copies* are still preserved.

Trwyn Pwcca.—Many years ago, there existed in a certain part of Monmouthshire a Pwcca, or fairy, which, like a faithful English Brownie, performed innumerable services for the farmers and householders in its neighbourhood, more especially that of feeding the cattle, and cleaning their sheds in wet weather; until at length some officious person, considering such practices as unchrstian proceedings, laid the kindly spirit for three generations, banishing him to that common receptacle for such beings — the Red Sea. The spot in which he disappeared obtained the name of *Trwyn Pwcca* (Fairy's nose); and as the three generations have nearly passed away, the approaching return of the Pwcca is anxiously looked forward to in its vicinity, as an earnest of the "good time coming."

The form which tradition assigns to this Pwcca, is that of a handful of loose dried grass rolling before the wind (such as is constantly seen on moors); a circumstance which recalls to mind the Pyrenean legend of the spirit of the Lord of Orthez, mentioned by Miss Costello, which appeared as two straws moving on the floor. Query, Has the name of "Will o' the Wisp" any connection with the supposed habit of appearing in this form?

SELEUCUS.—(Vol. ii. pp. 294—388.)

Shewri-while. — There is a legend connected with one of the Monmouthshire mountains (*Mynydd Llanhilleth*) that was, until very recently, implicitly believed by most of the residents in that neighbourhood. They stated that the mountain was haunted by a spirit in the form of a woman, and known by the name of "Shewri-while." Her principal employment appears to have been misleading those whose business or inclination led them across the mountain; and so powerful was her influence, that few, even of those who resided in the neighbourhood, could cross the mountain without losing their way. If some unlucky wanderer hesitated in which direction to go, Shewri would attract his attention by a loud "whoo-whoop," and with upraised arm beckon him on. If followed, she glided on before him: sometimes allowing him to approach so near, that the colour

and arrangement of her dress could be distinguished; at other times, she would only be seen at a distance, and then she frequently repeated her call of "whoo-whoop." At length, after wandering over the mountain for hours in the hope of overtaking her, she would leave her weary and bewildered pursuer at the very spot from which he had first started. CO.—(Vol. iii. p. 20.)

CURE OF LARGE NECK.

I send you two remedies in use here for the cure of a common complaint, called "large neck." Perhaps they may be worthy of a place in your "Folk Lore."

A common snake, held by its head and tail, is slowly drawn, by some one standing by, nine times across the front part of the neck of the person affected, the reptile being allowed, after every third time, to crawl about for a while. Afterwards the snake is put alive into a bottle, which is corked tightly and then buried in the ground. The tradition is, that as the snake decays the swelling vanishes.

The second mode of treatment is just the same as the above, with the exception of the snake's doom. In this case it is killed, and its skin, sewn in a piece of silk, is worn round the diseased neck. By degrees the swelling in this case also disappears. ROVERT. — (Vol. iii. p. 405.)

Withyam, Sussex.

CURE FOR CRAMP.

In the neighbourhood of Penzance the following is considered an infallible cure for cramp: "On going to rest, put your slippers under the bed and turn the soles upwards." J. M. B. — (Vol. vi. p. 601.)

NORFOLK CURE FOR EPILEPSIS.

In Norfolk, a ring made from nine sixpences freely given by persons of the opposite sex is considered a charm against epilepsy. I have seen nine sixpences brought to a silversmith, with a request that he would make them into a ring; *but* 13½*d.* was not tendered to him for making, nor do I

think that any threehalfpences are collected for payment. After the patient had left the shop, the silversmith informed me that such requests were of frequent occurrence, and that he supplied the patients with thick silver rings, but never took the trouble to manufacture them from the sixpences.

A similar superstition supposes that the sole of the left shoe of a person of the same age, but opposite sex, to the patient, reduced to ashes is a cure for St. Anthony's fire. I have seen it applied with success, but I suppose its efficacy is due to some astringent principle in the ashes. E. G. R.

FOLK LORE OF THE KACOUSS PEOPLE.

In *Blackwood*, January, 1852, mention is made, in a review of a French Folk Lore book, of the Kacouss, a sort of Breton parias formerly excluded from the society of Christians, and rejected even by the church, which permitted them to attend Divine service only at the door of the temple *under the bells*. What does this *under the bells* mean; and is anything more known of them than what is stated in that work? THOMAS LAWRENCE.—(Vol. v. p. 412.)

Ashby de la Zouch.

SHETLAND FOLK LORE.

The Wresting Thread. — When a person has received a sprain, it is customary to apply to an individual practised in casting the "wresting thread." This is a thread spun from black wool, on which are cast *nine* knots, and tied round a sprained leg or arm. During the time the operator is putting the thread round the affected limb, he says, in a muttering tone, in such a manner as not to be understood by the bystanders, nor even by the person operated upon—

> "The Lord rade (rode),*
> And the foal slade (slipped);
> He lighted,
> An she righted,
> Set joint to joint,

[* This charm is remarkable for its resemblance to an early

Bone to bone,
And sinew to sinew,
Heal in the Holy Ghost's name!!!"

Ringworm.—The person affected with ringworm takes a little ashes between the forefinger and thumb, three successive mornings, and before taking any food, and holding the ashes to the part affected says —

"Ringworm! ringworm red!
Never mayst thou spread or speed,
But aye grow less and less,
And die away among the ase (ashes)."

Burn.—To cure a burn, the following words are used:—

"Here come I to cure a burnt sore;
If the dead knew what the living endure,
The burnt sore would burn no more."

The operator, after having repeated the above, blows his breath three times upon the burnt place.

Elfshot.—A notion is prevalent, that when a cow is suddenly taken ill, she is elfshot; that is, that a kind of spirits called "trows," different in their nature from fairies, have discharged a stone arrow at her, and wounded her with it. Though no wound can be seen externally, there are different persons, both male and female, who pretend to feel it in the flesh, and to cure it by repeating certain words over the cow. They also fold a sewing needle in a leaf taken from a particular part of a psalm book, and sew it in the hair of the cow; which is considered not only as an infallible cure, but which also serves as a charm against future attacks. This is nearly allied to a practice which was at one time very prevalent, and of which some traces may perhaps still exist, in what would be considered a more civilised part of the country, of wearing a small piece of the branch of the rowan tree, wrapped round with red

German one found by Grimm in a MS. of the tenth century, originally published by him in 1842, and to be found, with references to Norwegian, Swedish, Flemish, and this Scottish version, in the second *edition of his Deutsche Mythologie*, s. 1181-2.—ED.]

thread, and sewn into some part of the garments, to guard against the effects of an "evil eye," or witchcraft:—

"Rowan-tree and red thread
Puts the witches to their speed."

In the neighbourhood of Peterhead, there lived, a few years ago, a famous exorcist, whose ancestors had for several generations practised the same profession. He was greatly resorted to by parties in the Buchan district, for curing elfshot cattle, cows whose milk had been surreptitiously taken away, to recover stolen property and find out thieves, and put a stop to "cloddings." This latter description of *diablerie*, is just a repetition of the Cock Lane ghost's tricks, and occasionally yet occurs. On one occasion the exorcist was bearded in his own den: for about twenty-five years ago a terrible "clodding" took place at a farm-house in the parish of Longside, a mile or two from his own; it defied the united efforts of priest and layman to lay it, and the operator was called in, and while in the middle of one of his most powerful exorcisms, was struck on the side of his head with a piece of peat. The annoyance continued a few weeks, and then ceased altogether. In the parish of Banchory Ternan, about seven years ago, a "clodding" took place, which created considerable sensation in the district. DUNROSSNESS.—(Vol. iv. p. 500.)

EAST WIND ON CANDLEMAS DAY.

The following couplet embodies a little bit of folk lore which may interest some of our readers.

"When the wind's in the east on Candlemas day,
There it will stick till the second of May."

G. B.—(Vol. v. p. 462.)

THE CROW CHARM AND THE LADY-BIRD CHARM.

The following charms are repeated by children throughout Yorkshire and Lancashire:—

Crow Charm.

"Crow, crow, get out of my sight,
Or else I'll eat thy liver and lights."

Lady-bird Charm.

"Lady-bird, lady-bird, eigh thy way home;
Thy house is on fire, thy children all roam,
Except little Nan, who sits in her pan,
Weaving gold-laces as fast as she can."

I remember, as a child, sitting out of doors on an evening of a warm summer or autumn day, and repeating the crow charm to flights of rooks, as they winged home to their rookery. The charm was chaunted so long as a crow remained in sight, the final disappearance of them being to my mind proof "strong as Holy Writ" of the efficacy of the charm.

The lady-bird charm is repeated to the insect (the *Coccinella septempunctata* of Linnæus)—the common seven-spotted lady-bird—to be found in every field and garden during summer.

The lady-bird is placed upon the child's open hand, and the charm is repeated until the insect takes to flight. The warmth and moisture of the hand no doubt facilitate this, although the child believes fully in the moving power of the charm.

N.B. The lady-bird is also known as *lady-cow*, *cow-lady*, and is sometimes addressed as *cusha-cow-lady*.

ROBERT RAWLINSON.—(Vol. iv. p. 55.)

MODE OF DISCOVERING THE BODIES OF THE DROWNED.

What must we think of the following, transcribed from the *Gentleman's Mag.*, vol. xxxvii. p. 189.? Can such things be?

"WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 1767.

"An inquisition was taken at *Newbury*, *Berks*, on the body of a child near two years old, who fell into the river *Kennet*, and was drowned. The jury brought in their verdict *accidental death*. The body was discovered by a very singular experiment, which was as

follows: — After diligent search had been made in the river for the child, to no purpose, a two-penny loaf, with a quantity of quicksilver put into it, was set floating from the place where the child it was supposed had fallen in, which steered its course down the river upwards of half a mile, before a great number of spectators, when the body happening to lay on the contrary side of the river, the loaf suddenly tacked about, and swam across the river, and gradually sunk near the child, when both the child and loaf were immediately brought up, with grablers ready for that purpose."

Is this experiment ever tried at the present time, and do there exist any authentic accounts of such trials and their results? * & ? — (Vol. iv. p. 148.)

Manpadt House.

It is curious that a similar practice to that of discovering the bodies of the drowned by loading a loaf with mercury, and putting it afloat on the stream, extracted from the *Gent. Mag.*, seems to exist among the North American Indians. Sir James Alexander, in his account of Canada (*L'Acadie*, 2 vols., 1849), says, p. 26.: —

"The Indians imagine that in the case of a drowned body, its place may be discovered by floating a chip of cedar wood, which will stop and turn round over the exact spot: an instance occurred within my own knowledge, in the case of Mr. Lavery of Kingston mill, whose boat overset, and the person was drowned near Cedar Island; nor could the body be discovered until this experiment was resorted to."

S. W.— (Vol. iv. p. 251.)

Liverpool.

The mode of doing this, as shown by S. W. to be practised by the North American-Indians, is very common amongst ourselves. About five and twenty years ago, an Eton boy, named Dean, who had lately come to the school, imprudently bathed in the river Thames where it flows with great rapidity under the "playing fields," and he was soon carried out of his depth, and disappeared. Efforts were made to save him or recover the body, but to no purpose; until Mr. Evans, who was then, as now, the accomplished drawing-master, threw a cricket bat into the stream, which floated to a spot where it turned round in an

eddy, and from a deep hole underneath the body was quickly drawn. This statement is entirely from memory, but I believe it to be substantially correct.

I heard the following anecdote from the son of an eminent Irish judge. In a remote district of Ireland a poor man, whose occupation at certain seasons of the year was to pluck feathers from live geese for beds, arrived one night at a lonely farm-house, where he expected to glean a good stock of these "live feathers," and he arose early next morning to look after the flock. The geese had crossed the river which flowed in front of the house, and were sitting comfortably in the sunshine on the opposite bank. Their pursuer immediately stripped off the few clothes he had, deposited them on the shore, and swam across the river. He then drove the birds into the water, and, boldly following them, he maintained a long contest to keep them together on their homeward voyage, until in the deep bed of the river his strength failed him, and he sank. The farmer and his family became aware of the accident, the cries of the drowning man, and the cackling of the geese, informed them, in the swimmer's extremity, of his fate, and his clothes lay on the shore in witness of his having last been in their company. They dragged the river for the body, but in vain; and in apprehension of serious consequences to themselves should they be unable to produce the corpse, they applied to the parish priest, who undertook to relieve them, and to "improve the occasion" by the *performance of a miracle.* He called together the few neighbours, and having tied a strip of parchment, inscribed with cabalistic characters, round a wisp of straw, he dropped this packet where the man's head was described to have sunk, and it glided into still water where the corpse was easily discovered. ALFRED GATTY.

The discovery of drowned bodies by loading a loaf with mercury, and putting it afloat on a stream, or by casting into the river, as the Indians do, "a chip of cedar wood, which will stop and turn round over the exact spot," is re-

ferrible to natural and simple causes. As there are in all running streams deep pools formed by eddies, in which drowned bodies would be likely to be caught and retained, any light substance thrown into the current would consequently be drawn to that part of the surface over the centre of the eddy hole. J. S. C.

GAME FEATHERS.

There is a common belief among the poor in the county of Sussex, that a person cannot die if his bed is stuffed with *game feathers*. A friend of mine a little time back was talking to a labourer on the absurdity of such a belief; but he failed to convince the good man, who, as *proof* of the correctness of his belief, brought forward the case of a poor man, who had lately died after a lingering illness. "Look at poor Muster S——, how hard he were a dying; poor soul, he could not die ony way, till neighbour Puttick found out how it wer, — 'Muster S——,' says he, 'ye be lying on geame feathers, mon, surely;' and so he wer. So we took'n out o'bed, and laid'n on the floore, and he *pretty soon died then!*" NEDLAM. — (Vol. v. p. 341.)

Mr. Albert Way (Vol. v. p. 412.), writes as follows on this subject: —

In a recent Number this singular superstition was stated to be prevalent in Sussex. In the adjoining county of Surrey the notion appears to be deeply rooted in the minds of the lower classes. A friend, residing in my parish (Betchworth), has given me several examples, which have fallen under his notice during the past winter.

"I was calling, a few weeks since, upon an old man whom I had left the previous day apparently in a dying state. At the door I met an old neighbour, and inquired if he was still living. 'Yes, Sir,' she said; 'we think he must change his bed.' 'Change his bed!' I replied. 'What do you mean?' 'Why, Sir, we think he can't pass away while he lies in that bed. The neighbours think there must be game-

feathers in the bed.' 'Game-feathers! what do you me
'Why, Sir, it is always thought a poor soul can't pass
if he is lying on game-feathers.' 'Oh,' I said, '
is nothing in that; that is not the reason of his lingerin
'No, Sir,' she replied, 'I think so too, for I know th
well. I was at the making of it, and the feathers wer
picked over.'

Not long after I looked in upon another aged man
had been confined to his bed upwards of four m
gently dropping into his grave without any other app
complaint than old age. He was a fine, hearty
man, with a constitution which kept him lingerin
beyond expectation. 'Well,' I said, 'how are yo
morning?' 'Oh, Sir, I have had a sad night. I h
when you left me, I should drop asleep and never
more in this world.' 'Yes, poor fellow,' said his
who stood by his bedside, 'he does not seem able t
we think we must move him to another bed.' 'Another
Why so?' 'Why, he does not seem able to die, a
think there must be wild feathers in his bed.' The ol
evidently thought with his sister, that his bed had some
to do with the protraction of his life. He died, howev
length, without being moved. It is needless to remark
the superstition would no doubt have been confirmed
the flickering lamp of life might have been extinguis
few hours sooner, had they carried into effect their pr
to drag him from one bed to another, or to lay him up
floor. The woman who helped to lay out the corpse
to see me, and I took the occasion to ask if she kne
belief, that a person could not die whilst lying upon
feathers. She assured me that she knew it to be the cas
that in two instances, when she had attended person
could not die, they had taken them out of their beds
they had expired immediately. I found all expostu
in vain; no argument could shake so strong a convi
and I have no doubt that this strange notion is e
sively entertained by the peasantry in these sou
counties.

I have since been informed that a similar belief exists in Cheshire, in regard to pigeons' feathers.

In the part of Surrey where I reside another popular belief still lingers, noticed elsewhere by writers on superstitions of this nature. On the decease of the head of a family, where bees are kept, some person forthwith goes to the hives and informs the bees of the event. Without this precaution, it is affirmed that they would speedily desert the hives. ALBERT WAY.

SWEARING ON A SKULL.

In April, 1851, a man was committed to Mayo prison for cutting off the head of a corpse but a few days interred. His object in severing the head was that of clearing himself of some imputed crime by swearing on a skull, a superstition said to be very common in that part of Ireland.

PHILIP S. KING.—(Vol. v. p. 485.)

BURNING THE BUSH.

While in Herefordshire last spring, I noticed a singular custom in the agricultural districts. When the wheat is just springing out of the ground, the farmer's servants rise before daybreak, and cut a branch of thorn of a particular kind. They then make a large fire in the field, in which they burn a portion of it; the remaining part is afterwards hung up in the house. They do this to prevent the smut, or mildew, affecting the wheat.

J. B. ROBINSON.—(Vol. v. p. 437.)

Belper.

OD.

One of the experiments by which the existence of this agency is tested, consists in attaching a horsehair to the first joint of the forefinger, and suspending to it a smooth gold ring. When the elbow is rested on the table, and the finger held in a horizontal position, the ring begins to oscillate in the plane of the direction of the finger; but it

a female takes hold of the left hand of the person thus experimenting, the ring begins forthwith to oscillate in a plane at right angles to that of its former direction. I have never tried the experiment, for the simple reason that I have not been able to prevail upon any married lady of my acquaintance to lend me her wedding-ring for the purpose; and even if I had found it come true, I should still doubt whether the motion were not owing to the pulsations of the finger veins; but whatever be the cause, the fact is not new. My father recently told me, that in his boyhood he had often seen it tried as a charm. For this purpose it is essential, as may be supposed, that the ring be a wedding-ring, and of course the lady towards whom it oscillates is set down as the future spouse of the gentleman experimenting. R. D. H.—(Vol. iv. p. 517.)

MAY CATS.

In Wilts, and also in Devon, it is believed that cats born in the month of May will catch neither mice nor rats, but will, contrary to the wont of all other cats, bring in snakes and slow-worms. Such cats are called "May cats," and are held in contempt. H. G. T.—(Vol. iii. p. 20.)

In Hampshire, to this day, we always kill May kittens. Cx.—(Vol. iii. p. 84.)

"MILLERY! MILLERY! DOUSTY-POLL!" ETC.

A cruel custom prevails among the children in Somersetshire, who, when they have caught a certain kind of large white moth, which they call a *miller*, chant over it this uncouth ditty: —

> "Millery! Millery! *Dousty*-poll!
> How many sacks hast thou stole?"

And then, with boyish recklessness, put the poor creature to death for the imagined misdeeds of his human namesake. H. G. T.—(Vol. iii. p. 133.)

PIGEONS EATEN BEFORE DEATH.

The popular belief, that a person cannot die with his head resting on a pillow containing pigeons' feathers, is well known; but the following will probably be as new to many of your readers as it was to myself. On applying the other day to a highly respectable farmer's wife to know if she had any pigeons ready to eat, as a sick person had expressed a longing for one, she said, "Ah! poor fellow! is he so far gone? A pigeon is generally almost the last thing they want; I have supplied many a one for the like purpose."

J. EASTWOOD.—(Vol. iv. p. 517.)

RUST.

If, without any neglect on your part, but even with care, articles of steel belonging to you, such as keys, knives, &c., continually become rusty, some kindhearted person is laying up money for *your* benefit.

This superstitious notion is very prevalent in Wales.

R. VINCENT.—(Vol. v. p. 486.)

PLACING SNUFF ON A CORPSE.

A custom prevails in some parts of Ireland, of placing a plate of snuff on the body of the dead; and that it is etiquette for all those who are invited to the funeral to take a pinch on arriving at the house of mourning. Hence has arisen the not very delicate threat, "I'll get a pinch of snuff off your belly yet;" by which Paddy would intimate to his rival his intention to survive him, and to crow over his remains. This must, indeed, be a pinch of "*rale* Irish."

ALFRED GATTY.—(Vol. v. p. 462.)

CHILDREN'S NAILS.

It is a general belief among the common people in this neighbourhood (Bottesford Moors), that if a child's finger nails are cut before it is a year old, it will be a thief. Before that time they must be bitten off when they require shortening.

EDWARD PEACOCK, Jun.—(Vol. vi. p. 71.)

THE FIRST MOLE IN CORNWALL: A MORALITY FROM THE STOWE OF MORWENNA, IN THE ROCKY LAND.

A lonely life for the dark and silent mole! She glides along her narrow vaults, unconscious of the glad and glorious scenes of earth, and air, and sea! She was born, as it were, in a grave, and in one long living sepulchre she dwells and dies! Is not existence to her a kind of doom? Wherefore is she thus a dark, sad exile from the blessed light of day? Hearken! Here, in our own dear Cornwall, the first mole was a lady of the land! Her abode was in the far west, among the hills of Morwenna, beside the Severn sea. She was the daughter of a lordly race, the only child of her mother, and the father of the house was dead. Her name was Alice of the Lea. Fair was she and comely, tender and tall; and she stood upon the threshold of her youth. But most of all did men wonder at the glory of her large blue eyes. They were, to look upon, like the summer waters, when the sea is soft with light! They were to her mother a joy, and to the maiden herself — ah! benedicite — a pride. She trusted in the loveliness of those eyes, and in her face, and features, and form: and so it was that the damsel was wont to pass the summer's day, in the choice of rich apparel, and precious stones, and gold. Howbeit this was one of the ancient and common customs of those old departed days. Now, in the fashion of her stateliness, and in the hue and texture of her garments, there was none among the maidens of old Cornwall like Alice of the Lea. Men sought her far and nigh, but she was to them all, like a form of graven stone, careless and cold. Her soul was set upon a Granville's love, fair Sir Bevil of Stowe, the flower of the Cornish chivalry — that noble gentleman! that valorous knight! He was her star. And well might she wait upon his eyes; for he was the garland of the west — the loyal soldier of a sainted king. He was that stately Granville who lived a hero-life, and died a warrior's death!

Now there was signal made of banquet in the halls of Stowe, of wassail, and the dance. The messengers had sped, and Alice of the Lea would be there. Robes, precious and many, were unfolded from their rest, and the casket poured forth jewel and gem, that the maiden might stand before the knight victorious! It was the day—the hour—the time. Her mother sate by her wheel at the hearth. The page waited in the hall. She came down in her loveliness into the old oak room, and stood before the mirrored glass. Her robe was of woven velvet, rich, and glossy, and soft; jewels shone like stars in the midnight of her raven hair, and on her hand there gleamed, afar off, a bright and glorious ring! She stood—she gazed upon her own countenance and form, and worshipped! "Now all good angels succour thee, dear Alice, and bend Sir Bevil's soul! Fain am I to see thee a wedded wife, before I die! I yearn to hold thy children on my knee! Often shall I pray to-night that the Granville heart may yield! Thy victory shall be my prayer!"

"Prayer!" was the haughty answer; "with the eyes that I see in that glass, and this vesture meet for a queen, I lack no doubting prayer!"

Saint Mary shield us! Ah words of evil sound! There was a shriek—a sob—a cry: and where was Alice of the Lea? Vanished—gone. They had heard wild tones of sudden music in the air. There was a rush—a beam of light—and she was gone, and that for ever! East sought they her, and west, in northern paths and south; but she was never more seen in the lands. Her mother wept till she had not a tear left: none sought to comfort her, for it was vain. Moons waxed and waned, and the crones by the cottage-hearth had whiled away many a shadowy night with tales of Alice of the Lea.

But, at the last, as the gardener in the Pleasance leaned one day on his spade, he saw among the roses a small round hillock of earth, such as he had never seen before, and upon it something which shone. It was her ring! it was the very jewel she had worn the day she vanished out of sight!

They looked earnestly upon it, and they saw within the border (for it was wide) the tracery of certain small fine letters in the ancient Cornish tongue, which said,—

"Beryan Erde,
Oyn und Perde!"

Then came the priest of the Place of Morwenna, a gray and silent man! He had served long years at a lonely altar, a bent and solitary form. But he had been wise in language in his youth, and he read the legend thus,—

"The earth must hide
Both eyes and pride!"

Now, as he uttered these words, they stood in the Pleasance by the mound; and on a sudden there was a low faint cry! They beheld, and, O wondrous and strange! there was a small dark creature, clothed in a soft velvet skin, in texture and in hue like the Lady Alice her robe; and they saw, as it went into the earth, that it moved along without eyes, in everlasting night. Then the ancient priest wept, for he called to mind all these things, and saw what they meant; and he showed them how that this was the maiden, who had been visited with doom for her pride. Therefore her rich array had been changed into the skin of a creeping thing; and her large proud eyes were sealed up; and she herself had become

The first mole!
Of the hillocks of Cornwall!

Ah; woe is me! and well-a-day! that damsel so stately and fair, sweet Lady Alice of the Lea, should be made for a judgment, — the dark mother of the moles!

Now take ye good heed, Cornish maidens, how ye put on vain apparel, to win love. And cast down your eyes, all ye damsels of the West, and look ye meekly on the ground! Be ye good and gentle, tender and true; and when ye see your image in the glass, and begin to be lifted up with the beauty of that shadowy thing, call to mind the maiden of

Morwenna, her noble eyes and comely countenance, the vesture of price, and the glittering ring. Sit ye by the wheel, as of old they sate, and as ye draw the lengthening wool, sing ye evermore and say,

"Beryan Erde,
Oyn und Perde!"

H.—(Vol. ii. p. 225.)

NORTH-LINCOLNSHIRE FOLK LORE.

1. Death sign. If a swarm of bees alight on a dead tree, or on the dead bough of a living tree, there will be a death in the family of the owner during the year.

2. If you do not throw salt into the fire before you begin to churn, the butter will not come.

3. If eggs are brought over running water they will have no chicks in them.

4. It is unlucky to bring eggs into the house after sunset.

5. If you wear a snake's skin round your head you will never have the headache.

6. Persons called Agnes always go mad.

7. A person who is born on Christmas Day will be able to see spirits.

8. Never burn egg-shells; if you do, the hens cease to lay.

9. If a pigeon is seen sitting in a tree, or comes into the house, or from being wild suddenly becomes tame, it is a sign of death.

10. When you see a magpie you should cross yourself; if you do not you will be unlucky.

EDWARD PEACOCK.—(Vol. viii. p. 382.)

Bottesford Moors.

The following, illustrating as it does a superstition still very prevalent in Lincolnshire, may interest some of your readers. I transcribed it a few days ago in the British Museum from Holly's *Lincolnshire Notes*, vol. iii. fol. 358.:—

"The other I receaued from Mr. Thomas Codd, minister of Laceby in Linc, wch he gave under his owne hand: he himself being a native of ye place where this same happened, and it was thus:

"At Axholme, alias Haxey, in ye Isle, one Mr. Edward Vicars (curate to Mr. Wm. Dalby, vicar), together with one Robert Hallywell a taylor, intending on St. Marke's even at night to watch in ye church porch to see who shoud die in ye yeare following (to this purpose using divers ceremonies), they addressing themselues to the busines, Vicars (being then in his chamber) wished Hallywell to be going before and he would psently follow him. Vicars fell asleep, and Hallywell (attending his coming in ye church porch) forthwith sees certaine shapes psenting themselves to his view, resemblances (as he thought) of diuers of his neighbours, who he did nominate; and all of them dyed the yeare following; and Vicars himselfe (being asleep) his phantome was seen of him also, and dyed with ye rest. This sight made Hallywell so agast that he looks like a Ghoast ever since. The lord Sheffield (hearing this relation) sent for Hallywell to receiue account of it. The fellow fearing my Lord would cause him to watch the church porch againe he hid himselfe in the Carrs till he was almost starued. The number of those that died (whose phantasmes Hallywell saw) was as I take it about fower score.

"Tho. Cod, Rector Ecclie de Laceby."

EDWARD PEACOCK.—(Vol. iv. p. 470.)

Bottesford Moors.

WARWICKSHIRE FOLK LORE.

The only certain remedy for the bite of an adder is to kill the offending reptile, and apply some of its fat to the wound. Whether the fat should be raw or melted down, my informant did not say, but doubtless the same effect would be produced in either case.

If a pig is killed in the wane of the moon, the bacon is sure to shrink in the boiling: if, on the other hand, the pig is killed when the moon is at the full, the bacon will swell.

ERICA.—(Vol. viii. p. 146.)

NORTHERN COUNTIES FOLK LORE.

Cattle watering.—

Man alive, an ox may drive
Unto a springing well:
For to drink, as he may think,
But this he can't compel.

Lambing Season.—

The best shepherd that ever "run,"
Can't tell whether a sheep goes twenty weeks or twenty-one.

ROBERT RAWLINSON.—(Vol. x. p. 180.)

CHANGE IN THE APPEARANCE OF THE DEAD.

A woman near Maidstone, who had much experience as a sick-nurse, told me some years ago that she had always noticed in corpses a change to a more placid expression on the third day after death; and she supposed this to be connected with our Lord's resurrection. I omitted to ask her whether the belief were wholly the result of her own observation, or whether it had been taught her by others, and were common among her neighbours.

J. C. R. — (Vol. ii. p. 435.)

THE FAIRIES IN NEW ROSS.

"When moonlight
Near midnight
Tips the rock and waving wood;
When moonlight
Near midnight
Silvers o'er the sleeping flood;
When yew-tops
With dew-drops
Sparkle o'er deserted graves;
'Tis then we fly
Through welkin high,
Then we sail o'er yellow waves."

Book of Irish Ballads.

There lived, some thirty years since, in the eastern part

of the suburbs of New Ross, in the county of Wexford, denominated the "Maudlins," a hedge carpenter named Davy Hanlon, better known to his neighbours by the sobriquet of "Milleadh Maide," or "Speilstick." Davy plied his trade with all the assiduity of an industrious man, "and laboured in all kinds of weather" to maintain his little family; and as his art consisted principally in manufacturing carts, ploughs, and harrows (iron ploughs not being then in use) for the surrounding farmers, and doctoring their old ones, the sphere of Davy's avocations was confined to no mean limits.

It was a dry sharp night in the month of November, and darkness had set in long before Davy left Mount Hanover, two miles distant from his home. At length he started forward, and had already reached the bridge of the Maudlins, when he stopped to rest; for besides his tools he carried a bundle of wheaten straw, which he intended for a more than usually comfortable "shake-down" for his dear rib Winny. The moon had by this time ascended above the horizon, and by its silvery radiance depicted in delicate outline the hills rising in the distance, while the tender rays mixing with, and faintly illumining the gloom of the intermediate valleys, formed a mass of light and shade so exquisitely blended as to appear the work of enchantment. As Davy leaned on the parapet of the bridge, a thrill of alarm involuntarily disturbed his feelings: he was about to depart when he heard a clamorous sound, as of voices, proceeding from that part of the valley on which he still gazed. Curiosity now tempted him to listen still longer, when suddenly he saw a group of dwarfish beings emerging from the gloom, and coming rapidly towards him, along the green marsh that borders the Maudlin stream. Poor Davy was terror-stricken at this unusual sight; in vain he attempted to escape: he was, as it were, spell-bound. Instantly the whole company gained the road beside him, and after a moment's consultation they simultaneously cried out, "Where is my horse? Give me my horse!" &c. In *the twinkling* of an eye they were all mounted. Davy's

feelings may be more easily imagined than described, and in a fit of unconsciousness his tongue, as it were mechanically, articulated "Where is my horse?" Immediately he found himself astride on a rude piece of timber, somewhat in shape of a plough-beam, by which he was raised aloft in the air. Away he went, as he himself related, at the rate of nine knots an hour, gliding smoothly through the liquid air. No aeronaut ever performed his expedition with more intrepidity; and after about two hours' journeying the whole cavalcade alighted in the midst of a large city, just as

"The iron tongue of midnight had told twelve."

One of the party, who appeared to be a leader, conducted them from door to door, Davy following in the rear; and at the first door he passed them the word, "We cannot enter, the dust of the floor lies not behind the door."* Other impediments prevented their ingress to the next two or three doors.

At length, having come to a door which was not guarded by any of these insuperable sentinels which defy the force of fairy assault, he joyfully cried out "We can enter here:" and immediately, as if by enchantment, the door flew open, the party entered, and Davy, much astonished found himself within the walls of a spacious wine-store. Instantly the heads of wine vessels were broken; bungs flew out; the carousing commenced; each boon companion pledged his friend, as he bedewed his whiskers in the sparkling beverage;

* Every good housewife is supposed to sweep the kitchen floor previously to her going to bed; and the old women who are best skilled in "fairy lore" affirm that, if through any inadvertence she should leave the dust thus collected behind the door at night, this dust or sweepings will have the power of opening the door to the fairies, should they come the way. It is also believed that, if the broom should be left behind the door, without being placed standing on its handle, it will possess the power of admitting the fairies. Should the water in which the family had washed their feet, before going to bed, be left in the vessel, on the kitchen floor, without having a coal of fire put into it, if not thrown out in the yard, it will act as porter to the fairies or good people.

and the wassail sounds float round the walls and hollow roof. Davy, not yet recovered from his surprise, stood looking on, but could not contrive to come at a drop: at length he asked a rather agreeable fairy who was close to him to help him to some. "When I shall have done," said the fairy, "I will give you this goblet, and you can drink." Very soon after he handed the goblet to Davy, who was about to drink, when the leader gave the word of command:

> "Away, away, my good fairies, away!
> Let's revel in moonlight, and shun the dull day."

The horses were ready, the party mounted, and Davy was carried back to the Maudlin bridge, bearing in his hand the silver goblet, as witness of his exploit. Half dead he made his way home to Winny, who anxiously awaited him; got to bed about four in the morning, to which he was confined by illness for months afterwards. And as Davy "lived from hand to mouth," his means were soon exhausted. Winny took the goblet and pledged it with Mr. Alexander Whitney, thé watchmaker, for five shillings In a few days after a gentleman who lived not twenty miles from Creywell Cremony came in to Mr. Whitney's, saw the goblet, and recognised it as being once in his possession, and marked with the initials "M. R.," and on examining it found it to be the identical one which he had bestowed, some years before, on a Spanish merchant. Davy, when able to get out, deposed on oath before the Mayor of Ross (who is still living) to the facts narrated above. The Spanish gentleman was written to, and in reply corroborated Davy's statement, saying that on a certain night his wine-store was broken open, vessels much injured, and his wine spilled and drunk, and the silver goblet stolen. Davy was exonerated from any imputation of guilt in the affair, and was careful, during his life, never again to rest at night on the Maudlin bridge.

PATRICK CODY.—(Vol. vii. p. 61.)

Mullinavat, county of Kilkenny.

SHROPSHIRE SUPERSTITION.

A remarkable case of a superstition yet lingering in this county having come under my notice, I have made farther inquiries, and find it by no means uncommon. At certain places the devil is supposed to exert a stronger influence than at others, and this is most perceptible in narrow and difficult ways. A village stile is a favourite resort of the adversary, and when, under such circumstances, an unfortunate wight attempts the surmounting, he finds his efforts fruitless, till he has turned some article of clothing inside out. So strongly is this superstition implanted, that I have heard of women deliberately turning their gowns before crossing the stile. The germ of this is doubtless from the fact of the devil impeding the progress of those who travel along the "narrow way," but the ceremony used by the annoyed is evidently a propitiation.

R. C. WARDE.—(Vol. ii. p. 142.)

Kidderminster.

UNLUCKY TO SELL EGGS AFTER SUNSET.*

The following paragraph is extracted from the *Stamford Mercury* of October 29, 1852.

"There exists a species of superstition in North Nottinghamshire against letting eggs go out of a house after sunset. The other day a person in want of some eggs called at a farm-house in East Markham, and inquired of the good woman of the house whether she had any eggs to sell, to which she replied that she had a few scores to dispose of. 'Then I'll take them home with me in the cart,' was his answer; to which she somewhat indignantly replied, 'That you'll not, don't you know the sun has gone down? You are welcome to the eggs at a proper hour of the day; but I would not let them go out of the house after the sun is set on any consideration whatever!'"

DRAUFIELD.—(Vol. vii. p. 7.)

* See ante p. 51.

NEW-BRUNSWICK FOLK LORE.

Common Notion respecting Teeth. — Among the lower orders and negroes, and also among young children of respectable parents (who have probably derived the notion from contact with the others as nurses or servants), it is here very commonly held that when a tooth is drawn, if you refrain from thrusting the tongue in the cavity, the second tooth will be golden.—(Vol. viii. p. 382.)

Superstition respecting Bridges. — Many years ago my grandfather had quite a household of blacks, some of whom were slaves and some free. Being bred in his family, a large portion of my early days was thus passed among them, and I have often reverted to the weird superstitions with which they froze themselves and alarmed me. Most of these had allusion to the devil: scarcely one of them that I now recollect but referred to him. Among others they firmly held that when the clock struck twelve at midnight, the devil and a select company of his inferiors regularly came upon that part of the bridge called "the draw," and danced a hornpipe there. So firmly did they hold to this belief, that no threat nor persuasion could induce the stoutest-hearted of them to cross the fatal draw after ten o'clock at night. This belief is quite contrary to that which prevails in Scotland, according to which, Robin Burns being my authority, "neither witches nor any evil spirits have power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream."*

C. D. D.—(Vol. viii. p. 382.)

New Brunswick, New Jersey.

* "Now, do thy speedy utmost Meg,
And win the key-stane of the brig;
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross."
Tam O'Shanter.

FRENCH FOLK LORE: MIRACULOUS POWERS OF A SEVENTH SON.

The following abridged translation of an article which appeared lately in a French provincial paper, *Le Journal du Loiret*, may prove interesting to the collectors of facts bearing on popular superstitions:

"We have more than once had occasion to make our readers acquainted with the superstitious practices of the *Marcous*. The *Orléanais* is the classic land of *marcous*, and in the *Gâtinais* every parish at all above the common is sure to have its *marcou*. If a man is the seventh son of his father, without any female intervening, he is a *marcou*; he has on some part of the body the mark of a *fleur-de-lis*, and, like the kings of France, he has the power of curing the king's evil. All that is necessary to effect a cure is, that the *marcou* should breathe upon the part affected, or that the sufferer should touch the mark of the *fleur-de-lis*. Of all the *marcous* of the *Orléanais*, he of Ormes is the best known and most celebrated. Every year, from twenty, thirty, forty leagues around, crowds of patients come to visit him; but it is particularly in Holy Week that his power is most efficacious; and on the night of Good Friday, from midnight to sunrise, the cure is certain. Accordingly, at this season, from four to five hundred persons press round his dwelling to take advantage of his wonderful powers."

The paper then goes on to describe a disturbance among the crowds assembled this year, in consequence of the officers of justice having attempted to put a stop to the imposture. The article concludes thus:

"The *marcou* of Ormes is a cooper in easy circumstances, being the possessor of a horse and carriage. His name is Foulon, and in the country he is known by the appellation of *Le beau marcou*. He has the *fleur-de-lis* on his left side, and in this respect is more fortunate than the generality of *marcous*, with whom the mysterious sign is apt to hide itself in some part of the body quite inaccessible to the eyes of the curious."

HONORÉ DE MAREVILLE.—(Vol. x. p. 26.)

NAVAL FOLK LORE.

In reading a French novel the other day, I met with the following passage:

"Antoine Morand était un de ces vieux matelots, nourris dans les principes de l'ancienne école, qui siffient pour appeler le vent, et apaisent l'orage en fouettant les mousses au pied du grand mât."

To whistle for a wind is a practice common I believe to all sailors; but I do not remember to have heard before, that the Spirit of the Storm was to be propitiated by flogging the unfortunate middies at the main-mast.

An infallible recipe for raising a storm is to throw a cat overboard. The presence of a clergyman, a corpse, or a dead hare on board a ship is said to bring bad weather.

HONORÉ DE MAREVILLE.—(Vol. x. p. 26.)

PORTUGUESE FOLK LORE.

"The borderer whispered in my ear that he was one of the dreadful Lobishomens, a devoted race, held in mingled horror and commiseration, and never mentioned without emotion by the Portuguese peasantry. They believe that if a woman be delivered of seven male infants successively, the seventh, by an inexplicable fatality, becomes subject to the powers of darkness; and is compelled, on every Saturday evening, to assume the likeness of an ass. So changed, and followed by a horrid train of dogs, he is forced to run an impious race over the moors and through the villages; nor is allowed an interval of rest until the dawning Sabbath terminates his sufferings, and restores him to his human shape." — From Lord Carnarvon's *Portugal and Gallicia*, vol. ii. p. 268.

E. H. A.—(Vol. viii. p. 582.)

THE ELDER TREE.

I was visiting a poor parishioner the other day, when the following question was put to me:

"Pray, Sir, can you tell me whether there is any doubt *of* what kind of wood our Lord's cross was made? I have

always heard that it was made of *elder*, and we look carefully into the faggots before we burn them, for fear that there should be any of this wood in them."

RUBI.—(Vol. vii. p. 177.)

LUCKY OMENS.

In the neighbourhood of Lancaster, I know ladies who consider it "lucky" to find *old iron;* a horseshoe or a rusty nail is carefully conveyed home and hoarded up. It is also considered lucky if you see the *head* of the first lamb in spring; to present his *tail* is the certain harbinger of misfortune. It is also said that if you have money in your pocket the first time you hear the cuckoo, you will never be without all the year. The magpie is a well-known bird of omen. The following lines were familiar when I was a boy:

> "One for sorrow, two for mirth,
> Three for a wedding, four for death;
> Five for a fiddle, six for a dance,
> Seven for England, eight for France."

T. D.

OMENS FROM BIRDS.

It is said that for a bird to fly into a room, and out again, by an open window, surely indicates the decease of some inmate. J. W. H.—(Vol. iv. p. 434.)

MOTHS CALLED SOULS.

In Yorkshire the country people used in my youth, and perhaps do still, call night-flying white moths, especially the *Hepialus humuli*, which feeds, while in the grub state, on the roots of docks and other coarse plants, "souls." Have we not in all this a remnant of "Psyche?" F. S.

[This paragraph furnishes a remarkable coincidence with the tradition from the neighbourhood of Truro (recorded by MR. THOMS in his Folk Lore of Shakspeare, *Athenæum*, No. 1041., Oct. 9. 1847) which gives the name of *Pisheys* both to the *fairies* and to *moths*, which are believed by many to be *departed souls*.]

AFRICAN FOLK LORE.

The following curious piece of folk lore is quotec an extract in *The Critic* (of April 1, 1853, p. 172.), course of a review of Richardson's *Narrative of a J to Central Africa, &c.:*

"To avert the evil eye from the gardens, the people (of Mo put up the head of an ass, or some portion of the bones of th mal. The same superstition prevails in all the oases that st North of Africa, from Egypt to the Atlantic, but the peo unwilling to explain what especial virtue there exists in a skull."

W. SPARROW SIMPSON, B. A. — (Vol. vii. p.

THE NIGHTMARE.

I recently observed a large stone, having a natura through it, suspended inside a Suffolk farmer's cow-l Upon inquiry of a labourer, I was informed this w tended as a preventive of nightmare in the cattle. informant (who evidently placed great faith in its effi added that a similar stone suspended in a bed-room knife or steel laid under the foot of the bed, was of service to the sleeper, and that he had himself frequ made use of this charm. J. B. C. — (Vol. iv. p. 4

ORKNEY CHARMS.

Toothache is by the country people called "The w from a notion they have that this painful affection is c by a worm in the tooth or jaw-bone. For the cure o disease, the following charm, called "wormy lines written on a slip of paper, which is sewed into some p the dress of the person affected, and must be carried the person as long as the paper lasts:

"Peter sat on a marble stone weeping,
Christ came past and said, 'What aileth thee, Peter?'
'O my Lord, my God, my tooth doth ache!'
'Arise, O Peter! go thy way, thy tooth shall ache no mor

For stopping hæmorrhage, as spitting of blood, bleeding from the nose, bleeding from a wound, &c., the following charm must be solemnly repeated once, twice, or oftener, according to the urgency of the case, by some old man or woman accounted more sagacious than their neighbours. It must not be repeated aloud, nor in the presence of any one except the patient:

"Three virgins came over Jordan's land,
Each with a bloody knife in her hand;
Stem, blood, stem — Letherly stand!
Bloody nose (or mouth) in God's name mend."

The pain occasioned by a burn or scald is here called "swey," or "sweying." To relieve "sweying," this charm must be repeated by a wise one, also in private:

"A dead wife out of the grave arose,
And through the sea she swimmed,
Through the water wade to the cradle,
God save the bairn-burnt sair.
Het fire, cool soon in God's name."

When a healthy child suddenly becomes sickly, and no one can account for the change, the child is said to have been "forespoken." Or when a stout man or woman becomes hypochondriac, or affected with nervous complaints, he or she is "forespoken." Some one has perhaps said "He's a bonny bairn," or "Thou ar' looking weel the day;" but they have spoken with an *ill tongue*. They have neglected to add, "God save the bairn," or, "Safe be thou," &c. For the cure of this, the following charm is repeated over water; which the patient must drink of, or be washed with:

"Father, Son, Holy Ghost,
Bitten sall they be
Wha have bitten thee!
Care to their near vein,
Until thou get'st thy health again,
Mend thou in God's name!"

Cattle and horses may also be "forespoken," and the same charm must be applied towards their cure.

The following charm is applied for the cure of sprains. A linen thread is tied about the injured part after the solemn repetition of the charm. The thread is called the "wristing thread," from the wrist or ankle being the part to which it is most commonly applied:

"Our Saviour rade,
His fore foot slade,
Our Saviour lighted down;
Sinew to sinew,—joint to joint,
Blood to blood, and bone to bone,
Mend thou in God's name!"

F.—(Vol. x. p. 220.)

FERNSEED.

I find in Dr. Jackson's works allusions to a superstition which may interest some of your readers:

"It was my hap," he writes, "since I undertook the ministry, to question an ignorant soul (whom by undoubted report I had known to have been seduced by a teacher of unhallowed arts, to make a dangerous experiment) what he saw or heard, when he watcht the falling of the *Fernseed* at an unseasonable and suspicious hour. Why (quoth he), fearing (as his brief reply occasioned me to conjecture) lest I should press him to tell before company, what he had voluntarily confessed unto a friend in secret some fourteen years before) do you think that the devil hath aught to do with that good seed? No; it is in the keeping of the *king of Fayries*, and *he*, I know, will do me no harm, although I should watch it again; yet had he utterly forgotten this king's name, upon whose kindness he so presumed, until I remembered it unto him out of my reading in *Huon of Burdeaux*.

"And having made this answer, he began to pose me thus: S^r^, you are a scholar, and I am none: Tell me what said the angel to our Lady? or what conference had our Lady with her cousin Elizabeth concerning the birth of St. John the Baptist?

"As if his intention had been to make bystanders believe that he knew somewhat more on this point than was written in such books as I use to read.

"Howbeit, the meaning of his riddle I quickly conceived, and he confessed to be this; that the angel did foretell John Baptist should be born at that very instant, in which the *Fernseed*, at other times invisible, did fall: intimating further (as far as I could then

perceive) that this saint of God had some extraordinary vertue from the *time* or *circumstance* of his birth." — *Jackson's Works*, book v. cap. xix. 8. vol. i. p. 916. Lond. 1673, fol.

In the sixth and seventh sections of the same chapter and book I find allusions to a maiden over whom Satan had no power "so long as she had vervine and St. John's grass about her;" to the danger of "robbing a swallow's nest built in a fire-house;" and to the virtues of "south-running water." Delrius also is referred to as having collected many similar instances.

I have not access to Delrius, nor yet to Huon of Burdeaux, and so am compelled deeply to regret that the good doctor did not leave on record the name of the "king of the Fayries."* RT.—(Vol. v. p. 172.)

ESSEX SUPERSTITION.

An uncle of mine, who has a large farm near Ilford, tells me, that observing a horse-shoe nailed to the door of one of his cow-houses, he asked the cow-keeper why he had fixed it there. The lad gravely replied, "Why, to keep the wild horse away, to be sure." This is, to me, a new reason for the practice.

I have learned that the superstition about the bees deserting their hives on the death of one of their owner's family, is common in the same county. A lady tells me, that calling upon some poor people who lived at Hyde Green, near Ingatestone, she inquired after the bees. The old woman of the house replied, "They have all gone away since the death of poor Dick; for we forgot to knock at the hives, and tell them he was gone dead."

C. MANSFIELD INGLEBY.—(Vol. v. p. 437.)

* [Oberon is his name, which Mr. Keightley shows to be identical with Elberich. *See* Fairy Mythology, p. 208. (ed. 1850).—ED.]

SCHOOL SUPERSTITIONS.

Several appear to exist in schools from generation to generation: do they exist anywhere else? and whence their origin? For instance: "a boy who could not span his own wrist was a bastard;" "if you said the Lord's Prayer backwards, the devil would come up," &c. A. C.

NEW-YEAR'S RAIN — SAXON SPELL.

The perusal of a good-natured notice in *The Athenæum* of December 6th, in which your contemporary suggests that communications on the subject of *Folk Lore* should be addressed "to N. & Q.," has reminded me of two Queries upon the subject, which I had originally intended to address to the editor of that paper, as they refer to articles which appeared in his own pages. On his hint, however, I will transfer them to your columns; and avail myself of the opportunity of thanking the editor of *The Athenæum* for having for so long a period and so effectually directed the attention of the readers of that influential journal to a subject of great interest to many, and of considerable historical value. The first relates to a song sung by the children in South Wales on New Year's morning, when carrying a jug full of water newly drawn from the well. It is given in *The Athenæum*, No. 1058., for the 5th Feb., 1848, and there several references will be found to cognate superstitions. My object is to ask if the song is known elsewhere; and if so, whether with any such varieties of readings as would clear some of the obscurities of the present version: —

"Here we bring new water
From the well so clear,
For to worship God with
This happy New Year.
Sing levez dew, sing levez dew,
The water and the wine;
The seven bright gold wires
And the bugles they do shine.

"Sing reign of Fair Maid
With gold upon her toe,—
Open you the West Door,
And let the Old Year go.
Sing reign of Fair Maid
With gold upon her chin,—
Open you the East Door,
And let the New Year in."

The second is from *The Athenæum's* very able review of Mr. Kemble's *Saxons in England*, — a work of learning and genius not yet nearly so well known as it deserves. The reviewer says: —

"In one of the Saxon spells, which Mr. Kemble has inserted in his appendix, we at once recognised a rhyme which we have heard an old woman in our childhood use — and in which many Saxon words, unintelligible to her, were probably retained."

If my communication should meet the eye of the gentleman who wrote this, I hope he will let the readers of "N. & Q." become acquainted with the rhyme in question. For it is obvious that among them will be found many who agree with him that "a very curious and useful compilation might be made of the various spells in use in different parts of England, classed according to their localities,—more especially if the collectors would give them verbatim," and who would therefore be willing to assist towards its formation. A FOLK-LORIST.

CORNISH FOLK LORE.

A recent old cottage tenant at Poliphant, near Launceston, when asked why he allowed a hole in the wall of his house to remain unrepaired, answered that he would not have it stopped up on any account, as he left it on purpose for the *piskies* (Cornish for *pixies*) to come in and out as they had done for many years. This is only a sample of the current belief and action. S. R. P.— (Vol. v. p. 173.)

SUPERSTITION OF THE CORNISH MINERS.

Mr. Kingsley records a superstition of the Cornish miners, which I have not seen noted elsewhere. In reply to the question, "What are the *Knockers?*" Tregarva answers:—

"They are *the ghosts*, the miners hold, *of the Old Jews that crucified our Lord, and were sent for slaves by the Roman emperors to work the mines:* and we find their old smelting-houses, which we call *Jews' houses*, and their blocks of the bottom of the great bogs, which we call *Jews' tin:* and then a town among us, too, which we call *Market Jew*, but the old name was *Marazion*, that means the Bitterness of Zion, they tell me; and bitter work it was for them no doubt, poor souls! We used to break into the old shafts and adits which they had made, and find old stags-horn pickaxes, that crumbled to pieces when we brought them to grass. And they say that if a man will listen of a still night about those old shafts, he may hear the ghosts of them at working, knocking, and picking, as clear as if there was a man at work in the next level."— *Yeast; a Problem:* Lond. 1851, p. 255.

Miners, as a class, are peculiarly susceptible of impressions of the unseen world, and the superstitions entertained by them in different parts of the world would form a curious volume. Is there any work on Cornish folk lore which alludes to this superstition respecting the Jews?

EIRIONNACH.—(Vol. viii. p. 7.)

I cannot find the information desired by your correspondent in the Cornish antiquaries, and have in vain consulted other works likely to explain this tradition; but the remarks now offered will perhaps be interesting in reference to the *nation* alluded to. The Carthaginians being of the same race, manners, and religion as the Phœnicians, there are no particular data by which we can ascertain the time of their first trading to the British coast for the commodity in such request among the traders of the East. The genius of Carthage being more martial than that of Tyre, whose object was more commerce than conquest, it is not improbable that the former might by force

of arms have established a settlement in the Cassiterides, and by this means have secured that monopoly of tin which the Phœnicians and their colonies indubitably enjoyed for several centuries. Norden, in his *Antiquities of Cornwall*, mentions it as a tradition universally received by the inhabitants, that their tin mines were formerly wrought by the Jews. He adds that these old works are there at this day called Attal Sarasin, the ancient cast-off works of the Saracens, in which their tools are frequently found. Miners are not accustomed to be very accurate in distinguishing traders of foreign nations, and these Jews and Saracens have probably a reference to the old merchants from Spain and Africa; and those employed by them might possibly have been Jews escaped the horrors of captivity and the desolation which about that period befel their country.

"The Jews," says Whitaker (*Origin of Arianism*, p. 334.), "denominated themselves, and were denominated by the Britons of Cornwall, *Saracens*, as the genuine progeny of Sarah. The same name, no doubt, carried the same reference with it as borne by the genuine, and as usurped by the spurious, offspring of Abraham."

BIBLIOTHECAR. CHETHAM.—(Vol. viii. p. 215.)

CORNISH FOLK LORE: KING ARTHUR IN THE FORM OF A RAVEN.

In Jarvis's translation of *Don Quixote*, book II. chap. v., the following passage occurs:—

"'Have you not read, sir,' answered Don Quixote, 'the annals and histories of England, wherein are recorded the famous exploits of King Arthur, whom in our Castilian tongue we always call King Artus; of whom there goes an old tradition, and a common one all over that kingdom of Great Britain, that this king did not die, but that by magic art he was turned into a raven; and, that in process of time he shall reign again, and recover his kingdom and sceptre; for which reason it cannot be proved that, from that time to this, any Englishman has killed a raven?'"

My reason for transcribing this passage is to record the

curious fact that the legend of King Arthur's existence in the form of a raven was still repeated as a piece of folk lore in Cornwall about sixty years ago. My father, who died about two years since at the age of eighty, spent a few years of his youth in the neighbourhood of Penzance. One day, as he was walking along Marazion Green with his fowling-piece on his shoulder, he saw a raven at a distance and fired at it. An old man who was near immediately rebuked him, telling him that he ought on no account to have shot at a raven, for that King Arthur was still alive in the form of that bird. My father was much interested when I drew his attention to the passage which I have quoted above. Perhaps some of your Cornish or Welsh correspondents may be able to say whether the legend is still known among the people of Cornwall or Wales.

EDGAR MACCULLOCH.—(Vol. viii. p. 618.)

Guernsey.

THE FOLK LORE OF A CORNISH VILLAGE.

Having pleasingly occupied my leisure in getting together all that is noteworthy respecting the past history and present condition of the place of my birth, I have thought that those chapters which treat of its folk lore might find an appropriate place in "N. & Q.," if abridged, and modified to suit its pages. Though the papers in another shape were read some time since before a provincial antiquarian society, they have never been published.

The place, whose popular antiquities are here to be recorded, is situated on the eminently romantic coast of the south-eastern part of Cornwall. The bold bluff hills resting by the sea-line on a margin of craggy transition slate, alike attractive to the artist and interesting to the geologist, have here, seemingly, suffered some disruption, and in the fissure is dropped the village, its houses resting on ledges in the hills, or skirting the inlets of the sea which forms its harbour. The inland country, for some distance, is a rapid *succession* of well-cultivated hill and "coomb," for that can

scarcely be called *valley* which is but the acute junction of the bases of opposite hills. The population is part seafaring, part agricultural, and in reference to education as well off as such people generally are. In this quiet corner lurk many remnants of faded creeds, and ancient usages which have vanished from districts more subject to mutation with the circumstances which gave rise to them, as the side eddies of a stream retain those sticks and straws which the current would have swept off to the ocean. I begin with an account of our fairy mythology.

Though the piskies, in spite of the prognostications of the poets, have outlived the "grete charite and prayers" of the limitour, and the changes in politics and religion which took place "when Elizabeth and later James came in," it is scarcely to be expected that they will withstand that great exorcist, *steam*, when it shall make its appearance among us, and there is the greater need that "all the fairies' evidence" should be entrusted to your safe keeping.

The belief in the little folk is far from dead, though the people of the present generation hold it by a slighter tenure than their forefathers did, and are aware that piskies are *now* fair objects of ridicule, whatever they formerly were. One old woman in particular, to whose recital of some of the following tales I have listened in mute attention, was a firm believer in them; and I remember her pettish reply, when a young friend of mine ventured to hint a doubt: "What! not believe in 'em, when my poor mother had been pinched black and blue by 'em." The argument was conclusive, for we could not then see its fallacy, though we have since learnt that the poor soul in question had not the kindest of husbands.

This creed has received so many additions and modifications at one time, and has suffered so many abstractions at another, that it is impossible to make any arrangement of our fairies into classes.

"The elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves"

are all now confounded under the generic name pisky.

Some of the later interpolations are of a very obvious character, as will hereafter be pointed out. Our piskies are little beings standing midway between the purely spiritual, and the material, suffering a few at least of the ills incident to humanity. They have the power of making themselves seen, heard, and felt. They interest themselves in man's affairs, now doing him a good turn, and anon taking offence at a trifle, and leading him into all manner of mischief. The rude gratitude of the husbandman is construed into an insult, and the capricious sprites mislead him on the first opportunity, and laugh heartily at his misadventures. They are great enemies of sluttery, and great encouragers of good husbandry. When not singing and dancing, their chief nightly amusement is in riding the colts, and plaiting their manes, or tangling them with the seed-vessels of the burdock. Of a particular field in this neighbourhood it is reported that the farmer never puts his horses in it but he finds them in the morning in a state of great terror, panting, and covered with foam. Their form of government is monarchical, as frequent mention is made of the "king of the piskies." We have a few stories of pisky changelings, the only proof of whose parentage was, that "they didn't goodey" (thrive). It would seem that fairy children of some growth are occasionally entrusted to human care for a time, and recalled; and that mortals are now and then kidnapped, and carried off to fairy land; such, according to the nursery rhyme, was the end of Margery Daw :—

> "See-saw, Margery Daw
> Sold her bed, and lay upon straw;
> She sold her straw, and lay upon hay,
> Piskies came and carri'd her away."

A disposition to laughter is a striking trait in their character. I have been able to gather little about the personalities of these creatures. My old friend before mentioned used to describe them as about the height of a span, clad in green, and having straw hats, or little red caps on their heads. Two only are known by name, and I have heard them addressed in the following rhyme: —

"Jack o' the lantern! Joan the wad!
Who tickled the maid and made her mad,
Light me home, the weather's bad."

I leave the stories of the *piskys-led*, of which this neighbourhood can furnish several *authentic* instances, for the following ancient legends, all careful copies of oral traditions.

Colman Grey.—A farmer, who formerly lived on an estate in our vicinity, was returning one evening from a distant part of the farm, when, in crossing a particular field, he saw, to his surprise, sitting on a stone in the middle of it, a miserable-looking little creature, human in appearance, though diminutive in size, and apparently starving with cold and hunger. Pitying its condition, and perhaps aware that it was of elfish origin, and that good luck would amply repay him for his kind treatment of it, he took it home, placed it by the warm hearth on a stool, and fed it with nice milk. The poor bantling soon recovered from the lumpish and only half-sensible state in which it was found, and, though it never spoke, became very lively and playful. From the amusement which its strange tricks excited, it became a general favourite in the family, and the good folk really felt very sorry when their strange guest quitted them, which he did in a very unceremonious manner. After the lapse of three or four days, as the little fellow was gamboling about the farm kitchen, a shrill voice from the *town-place* or farm-yard, was heard to call three times, "Colman Grey!" at which he sprang up, and gaining voice, cried "Ho! ho! ho! my daddy is come," flew through the key-hole, and was never afterwards heard of.

A Voyage with the Piskies.—About a mile to the eastward of us is a pretty bay, on the shores of which may be seen the picturesque church of Talland, the hamlet of Portallow, with its scattered farm-houses, and the green on which the children assemble at their sports. In old time, a lad in the employ of a farmer who occupied one of the homesteads was sent to our village to procure some little household necessaries from the shop. Dark

night had set in by the time he had reached Sandhill; on his way home, when half way down the steep road, the boy heard some one say, "I'm for Portallow-green." "As you are going my way," thought he, "I may as well have your company;" and he waited for a repetition of the voice, intending to hail it. "I'm for Portallow-green," was repeated after a short interval. "I'm for Portallow-green," shouted the boy. Quick as thought he found himself on the green, surrounded by a throng of little laughing piskies. They were, however, scarcely settled before the cry was heard from several tiny voices, "I'm for Seaton-beach,"—a fine expanse of sand on the coast between this place and Plymouth, at the distance of seven miles. Whether he was charmed by his brief taste of pisky society, or taken with their pleasant mode of travelling, is not stated; but, instead of turning his pockets inside out, as many would have done, he immediately rejoined, "I'm for Seaton-beach." Off he was whisked, and in a moment found himself on Seaton-beach. After they had for a while "danced their ringlets to the whistling winds," the cry was changed to "I'm for the king of France's cellar," and, strange to say, he offered no objection even to so long a journey. "I'm for the king of France's cellar," shouted the adventurous youth as he dropped his parcel on the beach not far from the edge of the tide. Immediately he found himself in a spacious cellar, engaged with his mysterious companions in tasting the richest of wines. They then passed through grand rooms fitted up with a splendour which quite dazzled the lad. In one apartment the tables were covered with fine plate and rich viands, as if in expectation of a feast. Though in the main an honest lad, he could not resist the temptation to take away with him some memorial of his travels, and he pocketed one of the rich silver goblets which stood on the table. After a very short stay the word was raised, "I'm for Seaton-beach," which being repeated by the boy, he was taken back as quickly as he went, and luckily reached the beach in time to save his parcel from the flowing tide. The next destination was Portallow-

green, where the piskies left our wondering traveller, who reached home, delivered his parcel of groceries, and received a compliment from the good wife for his dispatch. "You'd say so, if you only know'd where I've been," said he; "I've been wi' the piskies to Seaton-beach, and I've been to the king o' France's house, and all in five minutes." The farmer stared and expressed an opinion that the boy was *mazed*. "I thought you'd say I was mazed, so I brort (brought) away this mug to show vor et," he replied, producing the goblet. The farmer and his family examined it, wondered at it, and finished by giving a full belief to the boy's strange story. The goblet is unfortunately not now to be produced for the satisfaction of those who may still doubt; but we are assured that it remained the property of the lad's family for generations after.

The Pisky Threshers. — The next legend, though connected by us with a particular farm-house in the neighbourhood, is of much wider fame, and well illustrates the capriciousness of their tempers, and shows that the little folk are easily offended by an offer of reward, however delicately tendered.

Long, long ago, before threshing-machines were thought of, the farmer who resided at C., in going to his barn one day, was surprised at the extraordinary quantity of corn that had been threshed during the previous night, as well as puzzled to discover the mysterious agency by which it was effected. His curiosity led him to inquire into the matter; so at night, when the moon was up, he crept stealthily to the barn-door; and looking through a chink, saw a little fellow, clad in a very tattered suit of green, wielding the "dreshel" (flail) with astonishing vigour, and beating the floor with blows so rapid that the eye could not follow the motions of the implement. The farmer slunk away unperceived, and crept to bed; where he lay a long while awake, thinking in what way he could best show his gratitude to the pisky for such an important service. He came to the conclusion, at length, that, as the little fellow's clothes were getting very old and ragged, the gift of a new suit would be

a proper way to lessen the obligation; and, accordingly, on the morrow he had a suit of green made of what was supposed to be the proper size, which he carried early in the evening to the barn, and left for the pisky's acceptance. At night, the farmer stole to the door again to see how his gift was taken. He was just in time to see the elf put on the suit; which was no sooner accomplished than, looking down on himself admiringly, he sung:—

"Pisky fine, and pisky gay,
Pisky now will fly away."

Or, according to other narrators:—

"Pisky new coat, and pisky new hood,
Pisky now will do no more good."

From that time the farmer received no assistance from the fairy flail.

Another story tells how the farmer, looking through the key-hole, saw two elves threshing lustily, now and then interrupting their work to say to each other, in the smallest falsetto voice: "I tweat, you tweat?" The poor man, unable to contain his gratitude, incautiously thanked them through the key-hole; when the spirits, who love to work or play, "unheard and unespied," instantly vanished, and have never since visited that barn.

They seem sometimes to have delighted in mischief for its own sake. Old Robin Hicks, who formerly lived in a house on the cliff, has more than once, on stormy winter nights, been alarmed at his supper by a voice sharp and shrill: "Robin! Robin! your boat is adrift." Loud was the laughter and the *tacking* of hands when they succeeded in luring Robin as far as the quay, where the boat was lying safely at her moorings.

The Fisherman and the Piskies.—John Taprail, long since dead, moored his boat one evening beside a barge of much larger size, in which his neighbour John Rendle traded between this place and Plymouth; and as the wind, though gusty, was not sufficient to cause any apprehension, he went

to bed and slept soundly. In the middle of the night he was awoke by a voice from without bidding him get up, and "shift his rope over Rendle's," as his boat was in considerable danger. Now, as all Taprail's capital was invested in his boat and gear, we may be sure that he was not long in putting on his sea-clothes, and going to its rescue. To his great chagrin, he found that a joke had been played upon him, for the boat and barge were both riding quietly at their ropes. On his way back again, when within a few yards of his home, he observed a crowd of the little people congregated under the shelter of a boat that was lying high and dry on the beach. They were sitting in a semicircle, holding their hats towards one of their number, who was engaged in distributing a heap of money, pitching a gold piece into each hat in succession, after the manner in which cards are dealt. Now John had a covetous heart; and the sight of so much cash made him forget the respect due to an assembly of piskies, and that they are not slow to punish any intrusion on their privacy; so he crept slyly towards them, hidden by the boat, and, reaching round, managed to introduce his hat without exciting any notice. When the heap was getting low, and Taprail was awaking to the dangers of detection, he craftily withdrew his hat and made off with the prize. He had got a fair start, before the trick was discovered; but the defrauded piskies were soon on his heels, and he barely managed to reach his house and to close the door upon his pursuers. So narrow indeed was his escape, that he had left the tails of his sea-coat in their hands. Such is the evidently imperfect version of an old legend, as it is remembered by the fishermen of the present generation. We may suppose that John Taprail's door had a key-hole; and there would have been poetical justice in the story, if the elves had compelled the fraudulent fisherman to turn his hat or pocket inside out.

Our legend of the pisky midwife is so well related by Mrs. Bray, that it need not again be told, the only material difference being that in our story it was the accidental application to her eye of the soap with which she was washing

the baby, that opened to her the secrets of fairy land. (Abridged by Keightley, *Fairy Myth.*, Bohn's edition, p. 301.)

I have been unable to discover any traces of a belief in the existence of water-spirits. An old man was accustomed to relate that he saw, one stormy day, a woman, with long dank locks, sitting on the rocks in Talland Bay, and apparently weeping; and that, on his approach, she slid into the water and disappeared. This story is easily accounted for by supposing that he saw a seal (an animal that occasionally frequents that locality), the long hair being an allowable embellishment. Our fishermen talk of "mermaids;" and the egg-cases of the rays and sharks, which sometimes strew our beaches, are popularly called "mermaids purses;" but it is extremely doubtful whether these notions are a part of our old mythology.

Besides the piskies, but of a widely different character and origin, are the spectre-huntsman and his pack, now known as "the Devil and his Dandy-dogs." The genius of the tradition is essentially Scandinavian, and reminds us of the grim sights and terrible sounds which affright the belated peasant in the forests of the north. The tradition has become variously altered in its passage down to us, but it still retains enough of the terrible to mark its derivation. "The Devil and his Dandy-dogs" frequent our bleak and dismal moors on tempestuous nights, and are more rarely heard and seen in the cultivated districts by the coast, where they assume a less frightful character. They are most commonly seen by those who are out at night on wicked errands, and woe betide the wretch who crosses their path. A very interesting legend is told here, though it has reference to the wild moorland district far inland.

The Devil and his Dandy-dogs.—A poor herdsman was journeying homeward across the moors one windy night, when he heard at a distance among the tors the baying of hounds, which he soon recognised as the dismal chorus of the dandy-dogs. It was three or four miles to his home; and, very much alarmed, he hurried onward as fast as the

treacherous nature of the soil and the uncertainty of the path would allow; but, alas! the melancholy yelping of the hounds, and the dismal halloa of the hunter came nearer and nearer. After a considerable run, they had so gained upon him, that on looking back — oh, horror! — he could distinctly see hunter and dogs. The former was terrible to look at, and had the usual complement of *saucer-eyes*, horns, and tail accorded by common consent to the legendary devil. He was black, of course, and carried in his hand a long hunting-pole. The dogs, a numerous pack, blackened the small patch of moor that was visible; each snorting fire, and uttering a yelp of an indescribably frightful tone. No cottage, rock, or tree was near to give the herdsman shelter, and nothing apparently remained to him but to abandon himself to their fury, when a happy thought suddenly flashed upon him, and suggested a resource. Just as they were about to rush upon him, he fell on his knees in prayer. There was strange power in the holy words he uttered: for immediately, as if resistance had been offered, the hell-hounds stood at bay, howling more dismally than ever; and the hunter shouted "Bo shrove!" "which," says my informant, "means, in the old language, *the boy prays*." At which they all drew off on some other pursuit, and disappeared.

This ghastly apparition loses much of its terrible character as we approach more thickly populated districts, and our stories are very tame after this legend of the Moors. Many of the tales which I have heard are so well attested, that there is some reason to conclude that the narrators have really seen a pack of *fairies* (the local name, it is necessary to add, of the weasel); of which it is well known that they hunt gregariously at night-time, and, when so engaged, do not scruple to attack man.

We have no Duergar, Troll, or swart fairy of the mine; for ours is not a mining neighbourhood, and our hills have no fissures or caverns such as they delight to haunt.

Another object of superstition among our fishermen is the *white hare*, a being resembling the *létiche*. It frequents our

quays by night, and is quite harmless, except that its appearance is held to predict a storm.

Very palpable modifications of the old creed are to be noticed in the account of the "Devil and his Dandy-dogs," as well as in the opinion commonly held, that the fairy ranks are recruited by infants who are allowed to die without the rite of baptism.

It is with a feeling of jealousy that we first make the discovery, that the familiar tales which we have been taught from earliest days to associate with particular localities are told in foreign tongues by far-off firesides. But they soon assume a loftier interest when we become awake to their significance; and find that in them may be traced, as an eminent antiquary remarks,—

"The early formation of nations, their identity or analogy, their changes, as well as the inner texture of the national character, more deeply than in any other circumstances, even in language itself."—Wright, *Essays on Subjects connected with the Literature, &c., of England in the Middle Ages.*

The stories of the "Pisky Threshers" and the "Pisky Midwife" frequently occur, with variations, in the legends which Keightley has so industriously collected in his learned and interesting *Fairy Mythology;* but the "Voyage of the Piskies" and "The Fishermen and the Piskies" are not so common. The former will, however, remind the reader of the adventures of Lord Duffers, as given by Aubrey. In Mackie's *Castles, Palaces, and Prisons of Mary Queen of Scots*, a similar tale is told of a butler in the house of Monteith; with this difference, that the traveller had witches for his companions, and a bulrush for his nag.

Witchcraft, &c. — The belief in witchcraft holds its ground very firmly, and of all superstitions it will probably be the last to die out, since, to mention no other influence, the inductive process of reasoning will never be a popular one; and there will always be a greater number who, too impatient to question the material, hastily resort to the spiritual for an explanation of all phenomena, down to the

creakings and oscillations of tables. Many strange natural coincidences are occurring daily, which to minds not over-nice about distinctions between *post* and *propter*, have all the relationship of cause and effect.

The notion that mysterious compacts are formed between evil spirits and wicked men has become almost obsolete. In the present day such a bargain is rarely suspected, and there are few found hardy enough to avow themselves parties to so unholy a transaction. One instance occurs to my memory of a poor unhappy fellow who pretended, in vulgar parlance, to have sold himself to the devil, and was accordingly regarded by his neighbours as a miracle of impiety. He was not, however, actively vicious, never being known to use his supernatural powers of ill-doing to the detriment of others, except, indeed (and they were the only occasions upon which he is said to have openly asked the foul fiend's assistance), when the depth of his potations had not left him enough to pay the reckoning. He was then accustomed to hold his hat up the chimney, and demand money, which was promptly showered down into it. The coin so obtained the landlord invariably refused with a shudder, and was glad to get quit of him on these terms. This compact with the spirit of evil is now but vaguely suspected as the secret of the witch's power.

The faculty of witchcraft is held to be hereditary, and it is not the least cruel of the effects of this horrible creed, that many really good-natured souls have on this account been kept aloof by their neighbours, and rendered miserable by being ever the object of unkind suspicions. When communication with such persons cannot be avoided, their ill-will is deprecated by a slavish deference. If met on the highway, care is taken to pass them on the right hand.

Witches are supposed to have the power of changing their shape and resuming it again at will. A large hare which haunted this neighbourhood had on numberless occasions baffled the hounds, or carried off, unhurt, incredible quantities of shot. One luckless day it crossed the path of a party of determined sportsmen, who followed it for many

weary miles, and fired several rounds with the usual want of success. Before relinquishing the chase, one of them, who considered the animal as something beyond an ordinary hare, suggested the trial of silver bullets, and, accordingly, silver coins were beaten into slugs for this purpose. The hare was again seen, fired at, and, this time, wounded, though not so effectually as to prevent its running round the brow of the hill, and disappearing among the rocks. In searching for the hare, they discovered instead old Molly, crouched under a shelving rock, panting and flushed by the long chase. From that day forward she had a limp in her gait.

The toad and the black cat are the most usual attendants of the witch, or rather the form her imps most commonly assume. The appearance of a toad on the doorstep is taken for a certain sign that the house is under evil influence, and the poor reptile is put to some frightfully barbarous death.

The most common results of the witch's malice, or, as it is termed, *the ill-wish*, are misfortunes in business, diseases of an obstinate and deadly character in the family, or among the cattle. The cow refuses "to give down her milk," the butter is spoilt in making, or the household is tormented by a visitation in incredible numbers of those animalcules said "to be familiar to man, and to signify love." There are a hundred other ways in which the evil influence may be manifested.

When witchcraft is suspected, the person *overlooked* has immediate recourse to the *conjurer*, the very bad representative of the astrologer of a former age. The conjurer is an important character in our village. He is resorted to by despairing lovers; he counsels those who are under the evil eye, and discloses the whereabouts of stolen goods. His answers, too, are given with true oracular ambiguity. "Own horn eat own corn" was his reply to a person who consulted him about the disappearance of various little household articles. When appealed to in cases of suspected witchcraft, the certainty of weird influence is proved

beyond doubt, and the first letter of the witch's name, or description of her person is given, or even, so it is said, her bodily presence shown in a mirror. I know but little of the incantations practised on these occasions.

The certainty of the ill-wish being thus established, and the person of the witch fixed on, the remembrance of some past "difference" or quarrel places the matter beyond doubt. This mode of proceeding to a conclusion is truly and quaintly described by old Dr. Harsenet. "Beware, look about you, my neighbours. If any of you have a sheep sick of the giddies, or a hog of the mumps, or a horse of the staggers, or a knavish boy of the school, or an idle girl of the wheel, or a young drab of the sullens, and hath not fat enough for her porrage, or butter enough for her bread, and she hath a little help of the epilepsy, or cramp, to teach her to roll her eyes, wry her mouth, gnash her teeth, startle with her body, hold her arms and hands stiff, &c. And then when an old Mother Nobs hath by chance called her 'idle young housewife,' or bid the devil scratch, then no doubt but Mother Nobs is the witch, and the young girl is owl-blasted." (*Declaration of Popish Impostures, quoted by Hutchinson.*)

One of the various methods of dissolving the spell is now resorted to. It is a belief that the power for evil ceases the moment blood is drawn from the witch, and this is now and then tried, as in a late instance where a man was summoned before the bench of magistrates and fined for having assaulted the plaintiff and scratched her with a pin. When an ox or other beast has died in consequence of the ill-wish, it is usual to take out the heart, stick it over with pins and nails, and roast it before the fire until the pins and nails have one by one dropped out of it; during which process the witch is supposed to be suffering in mysterious sympathy with the wasting heart. There are many stories told of how the wicked woman has been driven by these means to confess, and to loose the family from the spell. Recourse is sometimes had to measures of a less delicate description. When the friendly parasites become unpleasantly numerous

it was, not long since, the custom to send a friend, or even the town crier, to shout near the door of the witch, "Take back your flock! take back your flock!" a ceremony which was said to be followed by an abatement of the inconvenience. The wiser method of preventing spells is very often taken, and the house and all it contains are protected by the nailing of a horse-shoe over the centre of the doorway. There are few farm-houses without it, and scarcely a boat or vessel puts to sea without this talisman. Another preventive of great fame is the mountain-ash, or *care*, of which more hereafter.

Besides the witch and the conjurer, we have yet another and more pleasing character to mention, namely the *charmer*. She is generally an elderly woman of good reputation, and supposed to be gifted with supernatural power, which she exercises for good. By her incantations and ceremonies she stops blood, cures inflamed eyes, and the erysipelas, *vulgo vocato*, *wild-fire*. I know but little of her doings, except that she is too much given to make frequent and vain use of sacred names in her verses. The following is one of her many charms, good for an inflammation: —

> "There were two angels came from the east;
> One brought fire the other frost.
> Out fire! in frost!
> In the name of" &c.

I shall finish this note by transcribing an original letter dated Sept^{r}. y^{e} 14th, 1696, and addressed by Blackburne (? Archdeacon) to the Bishop of Exeter of that date. It is interesting, and comes in appropriately as illustrative of witchcraft in the West of England. The case is mentioned by Hutchinson, who gives some details which do not differ from those here given, and remarks that "no inconvenience hath followed from her acquittal." (*Historical Essay*, p. 612. 2nd edit.)

"My Most Hon^{d}. Lord,

Y^{r} Lordship was pleas'd to command me by Mustion to attend the tryal of y^{e} witch, and give you some account of it. It was thus:

Elizabeth Horner, alias Turner, was arraigned on three several inditements for murthering Alice, the daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Bovet, and for pining and laming Sarah and Mary, daughters of y^e^ same Thomas and Elizabeth Bovet.

The evidence given w^ch^ was anything material was this: — Thomas Bovet, the father, swears that Alice the youngest of y^e^ three daughters, being about four years old was taken very ill in her belly, &c., that physitiens cou'd see no natural cause of her illness, and y^t^ she died in five days. That Mary was so taken likewise. Her body strangely distorted, and her legs twisted like the screw of a gun, that she wou'd often go w^th^ her eyes shut into the fire, and say that Bett Horner drove her in: continued thus about seven weeks. She was about ten years old.

That Sarah, nine years old, was taken after the same manner, — complained of being scratch't in bed by a cat w^ch^ she said was Bett Horner, whom she described exactly in the apparel she had on, tho' the child had not seen her in six months before.

That after her imprisonment they were both tormented by pinching and biting, all y^e^ time crying out stil on Bett Horner, at present the prints of pinches and markes of teeth appearing on their arms and cheeks (this point attested also by Justice Auchester who was w^th^ the children at y^e^ time). That they would vomit pins and stones, two crooked pins came away in Sarah's water. Sarah cry'd out, the witch had put a pin into her, the point of one appeared just under the skin, and at last it came out upon her middle finger; cry'd out of being struck by the witch w^th^ a stick, the mark of which stroke appear'd at the time upon her ankle. Sarah said that Bett Horner told her how she kill'd Alice by squeezing her breath out of her body, and that she had a teat on her left shoulder which was suck't by toads.

Elizabeth Bovet, the mother, depos'd in like manner concerning Alice, who continued ill five days, and so dy'd, crying out, — Why doe you kill me. That Sarah and Mary

were taken ill alternately, not able to say their prayers, saying they were threatened by the witch, if they shou'd doe it, to be served by her as Alice was, and that she made 'em swear and curse. That they were both of late very hungry and being ask'd why they were so, they said the head of Bett Horner came off of her body and went into their belly, which wou'd, when they said so appear to be prodigiously swell'd, and the swelling abate all of a sudden, when they said it was gone out of 'em again.

That Sarah walk't up a wall nine foot high four or five times backwards and forwards, her face and forepart of her body parallel to the ceiling of y^e^ room, saying at the time that Bett Horner carry'd her up.

The children were also produced in court, who gave the same account sensibly enough, Mary adding further that she saw Bett Horner in her full shape, playing with a toad in a basin, and leaving it suck her at a nipple between her breast and shoulder.

Alice Osborne swore that she threaten'd her upon refusing her some barm. She afterwards found a vessel, after she had wash't it for brewing, fill'd full of drink which they threw away, and then brewing and filling y^e^ vessel with drink, in four or five days, neither she, nor her husband having drawn any, she found it quite empty and as dry as if no drink had ever been in it. That Bett Horner threatened her husband saying, Thou hast children as well as others, and if I come home again, I'll mind some of 'em.

John Fursey depos'd to his seeing her three nights together upon a large down in the same place as if rising out of the ground.

Margaret Armiger depos'd that on y^e^ Saturday before the tryal, when the witch was in prison, she met her in the country at about twenty feet distance from her.

Mary Stevens depos'd she took a red-hot nail, and drove it into the witch's left foot-step, upon which she went lame, and being search'd her leg and foot appear'd to be red and fiery, that she continued so four or five days, when she

pull'd up the nail again, and then the witch was well. This is what was most material against her. The witch deny'd all, shew'd her shoulder bare in court, when there appear'd nothing but a kind of mole or wart, as it seem'd to me. She said the Lord's prayer, stopping a little at *forgive us our trespasses*, but recovered and went on, and she repeated the Creed without a fault.

My Lord Chief Justice, by his questions and manner of hemming up the evidence seem'd to me to believe nothing of witchery at all, and to disbelieve the fact of walking up the wall, which was sworn by the mother.

My Lord,
Y^r^ Lp^s^ Most Oblig'd and
Most obedient humble Serv
BLACKBURNE."

Charms, Omens, &c.—The domestic treatment of disease among our poor consists chiefly of charms and ceremonies; and even when material remedies are employed, as much importance is attached to the rites which attend their employment as to the agents used. In many cases we may notice remnants of the old doctrine of signatures, and the idea of sympathies and antipathies between separate and dissimilar bodies. In the cure of hæmorrhages, the preference is given to medicines of a bright red colour; and saffron-water, the brightest-coloured decoction they are acquainted with, is administered to throw out eruptions of the skin. The nettle-rash is treated by copious draughts of nettle-tea. The fisherman, whose hand is wounded by a hook, is very careful to preserve that hook from rust during the healing of the wound.

The following instances will illustrate the superstitious character of the household medicine of the poorer of our population:—

If the infant suffers from the *thrush*, it is taken, fasting, on three following mornings, "to have its mouth blown into" by a posthumous child. If afflicted with the hooping cough, it is fed with the bread and butter of a family the heads of which bear respectively the names John and Joan—a

serious thing for the poor couple in time of an epidemic. Or if a piebald horse is to be found in the country, the child is taken to it, and passed thrice under its belly. The mere possession of such a beast confers the power of curing this disease. The owner of a piebald horse states that he has frequently been stopped on the road by anxious mothers, who inquire of him in a casual way, what is good for the hooping cough; and the thing he mentioned, however inappropriate or absurd, was held to be a certain remedy in that particular case.

The passing of children through holes in the earth, rocks, or trees, once an established rite, is still practised in various parts of Cornwall. With us, boils are cured by creeping on the hands and knees beneath a bramble which has grown into the soil at both ends. Children affected with hernia are still passed through a slit in an ash sapling before sunrise fasting; after which the slit portions are bound up, and as they unite so the malady is cured. The ash is indeed a tree of many virtues: venomous reptiles are never known to rest under its shadow, and a single blow from an ash stick is instant death to an adder; struck by a bough of any other tree, the reptile is said to retain marks of life until the sun goes down. The antipathy of the serpent to the ash is a very old popular fallacy. (Pliny, *Hist. Mundi*, lib. xvi.)

The mountain ash, or *care*, has still greater repute among our country-folk in the curing of ills arising from supernatural as well as ordinary causes. It is dreaded by evil spirits; it renders null the spells of the witch, and has many other wonderful properties. The countryman will carry for years a piece of the wood in his pocket as a charm against ill-wish, or as a remedy for his rheumatism. If his cow is out of health, and he suspects her to be *overlooked*, away he runs to the nearest wood and brings home bunches of care, which he suspends over her stall, and wreathes round her horns; after which he considers her safe.

Boys, when stung by nettles, have great faith in the antidotal properties of the dock; and whilst rubbing it into the

part in pain, repeat the words, "Out nettle, in dock—nettle, nettle, stung me."

The cures for warts are many and various. A piece of flesh is taken secretly, and rubbed over the warts; it is then buried; and as the flesh decays, the warts vanish. Or some mysterious vagrant desires them to be carefully counted, and marking the number on the inside of his hat, leaves the neighbourhood—when the warts also disappear.

There are a few animals the subject of superstitious veneration, and a much greater number whose actions are supposed to convey intimations of the future. In some instances it would seem that they are considered more in the light of *cause* than *prognostic;* yet as the doctrine of fatalism, in a restricted sense, runs through the popular belief, we may consider the conduct of the inhospitable housewife who drives off the cock that crows on the door-step, thereby warning her of the approach of strangers, as only a fresh illustration of the very old fallacy, that the way to avert the prediction is to silence the prophet. Here are some of our superstitions connected with animals, &c.: —

The howling of dogs, the continued croaking of ravens over a house, and the ticking of the death-watch, portend death. The magpie is a bird of good or ill omen, according to the number seen at a time: —

> "One for sorrow; two for mirth;
> Three for a wedding; four for death."

A crowing hen is a bird of ill luck. An old proverb in use here says: —

> "A whistling woman, and a crowing hen, are two of the unluckiest things under the sun."

The first is always reproved, and the latter got rid of without loss of time. Pluquet, in his book on the superstitions of Bayeux, gives this identical proverb: —

> "Une poule qui chante le coq, et une fille qui siffle, portent malheur dans la maison."

If, on the first hearing the cuckoo, the sounds proceed from the right, it signifies that you will be prosperous; or, to use the language of my informant, a country lad, "You will go vore in the world;" if from the left, ill-luck is before you. Children are frequently heard to hail the cuckoo in a verse which, as it has recently appeared in "N. & Q." I shall not repeat, except the former part of the second quatrain, which is a pretty variation from the commoner version:—

> "*He sucks the sweet flowers,*
> To make his voice clear."

Particular honour is paid to the robin and the wren. A local distich says:—

> "He that hurts a robin or a wren
> Will never prosper sea nor land."

This gives them a protection which the most mischievous urchin never dares to violate.

It is a very prevalent belief that a bed-pillow, stuffed with the feathers of wild birds, renders painful and prolonged the departure of the dying. Death is also thought to be delayed until the ebb of the tide.

The killing the first adder you see predicts that you will triumph over your enemies. The slough of an adder, hung on the rafters, preserves the house against fire.

Our forefathers appear to have been among those who considered bees as possessing a portion "divinæ mentis:" for there is a degree of deference yet paid to them, that would scarcely be offered to beings endowed with only ordinary animal instinct. On the death of a relative, the bees are acquainted of the event by moving the hive, or putting it in mourning by attaching a piece of black cloth or crape to it. The sale of bees is a very unlucky proceeding; and they are generally transferred to another owner, with the tacit understanding that a bushel of corn (the constant value of a swarm) is to be given in return. In cases of death, the in-door plants are also put in black; for, if this is omitted, they soon droop and die.

The cricket is a bringer of good luck, and its departure from a house is a sign of coming misfortune.

Amongst the omens believed in, or existing in proverbs, I may farther mention, that the breaking of a looking-glass entails "seven years' trouble, but no want;" that the dirgeful singing of children portends a funeral. There is scarcely a sensation but has its meaning. If the left palm itches, you will have to pay money; if the right, to receive. If the knee itches, you will kneel in a strange church; if the sole of the foot, you will walk over strange ground; if the elbow, you will sleep with a strange bed-fellow. If the ear tingles, you will hear sudden news. If you shiver, some one is walking over the spot destined to be your grave. If the cheek burns, some one is talking scandal of you. I have frequently heard these lines spoken by the person whose cheek is burning:—

"Right cheek!—left cheek! why do you burn?
Cursed be the that doth me any harm:
If she be a maid, let her be slaid;
If she be a widow, long let her mourn:
But if it be my own true love—burn, cheek, burn!"

THOMAS Q. COUCH.

(Vol. xi. pp. 397. 457. 497. vol. xii. p. 37.)

Cornwall.

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE.

At a village in the West Riding, a farmer had lost many horses; a person wished to buy an old horse: the farmer refused, saying that if he buried the horse entire the disease would end. This absurdity is fully believed.

A person going to be married, on meeting a male acquaintance, always begins rubbing his elbow.

When a newly married couple first enter their house, a person brings in a hen and makes it cackle, to bring good-luck to the newly married people.

M. L.—(Vol. vi. p. 601.)

YORKSHIRE TRADITION.

The following tradition of Osmotherly, in Yorkshire, was related to me as being current in that county.

Some years ago there lived in a secluded part of Yorkshire a lady who had an only son named Os or Oscar. Strolling out one day with her child they met a party of gipsies, who were anxious to tell her the child's fortune. After being much importuned she assented to their request. To the mother's astonishment and grief they prognosticated that the child would be drowned. In order to avert so dreadful a calamity, the infatuated mother purchased some land and built a house on the summit of a high hill, where she lived with her son a long time in peace and seclusion. Happening one fine summer's day in the course of a perambulation to have fatigued themselves, they sat down on the grass to rest and soon fell asleep. While enjoying this repose, a spring rose up from the ground, which caused such an inundation as to overwhelm them, and side by side they found a watery grave. After this had occurred, the people residing in the neighbourhood named it Os-by-his-mother-lay, which has since been corrupted into Osmotherly.

R. W. Carter.—(Vol. viii. p. 617.)

LEGENDS OF THE COUNTY CLARE.

On the west coast of Ireland, near the Cliffs of Moher, at some distance out in the bay, the waves appear continually breaking in white foam even on the calmest day. The tradition among the country people is, that a great city was swallowed up there for some great crime, and that it becomes visible once every seven years. And if the person who sees it could keep his eyes fixed on it till he reached it, it would then be restored, and he would obtain great wealth. The man who related the legend stated farther, that some years ago some labourers were at work in a field on the hill-side in view of the bay; and one of them, happening to cast his

eyes seaward, saw the city in all its splendour emerge from the deep. He called to his companions to look at it; but though they were close to him, he could not attract their attention: at last, he turned round to see why they would not come; but on looking back, when he had succeeded in attracting their attention, the city had disappeared.

The Welsh legend of the Islands of the Blessed, which can only be seen by a person who stands on a turf from St. David's churchyard, bears a curious coincidence to the above. It is not impossible that there may have been some foundation for the vision of the enchanted city at Moher in the *Futa Morgana*, very beautiful spectacles of which have been seen on other parts of the coast of Ireland.

How Fuen-Vic-Couil (Fingall) obtained the knowledge of future events. — Once upon a time, when Fuen-Vic-Couil was young, he fell into the hands of a giant, and was compelled to serve him for seven years, during which time the giant was fishing for the salmon which had this property — that whoever ate the first bit of it he would obtain the gift of prophecy; and during the seven years the only nourishment which the giant could take was after this manner: a sheaf of oats was placed to windward of him, and he held a needle before his mouth, and lived on the nourishment that was blown from the sheaf of corn through the eye of the needle. At length, when the seven years were passed, the giant's perseverance was rewarded, and he caught the famous salmon and gave it to Fuen-Vic-Couil to roast, with threats of instant destruction if he allowed any accident to happen to it. Fuen-Vic-Couil hung the fish before the fire by a string, but, like Alfred in a similar situation, being too much occupied with his own reflections, forgot to turn the fish, so that a blister rose on the side of it. Terrified at the probable consequences of his carelessness, he attempted to press down the blister with his thumb, and feeling the smart caused by the burning fish, by a natural action put the injured member into his mouth. A morsel of the fish adhered to his thumb, and immediately he received the knowledge for which the giant had toiled so long in vain.

Knowing that his master would kill him if he remained, he fled, and was soon pursued by the giant breathing vengeance: the chase was long, but whenever he was in danger of being caught, his thumb used to pain him, and on putting it to his mouth he always obtained knowledge how to escape, until at last he succeeded in putting out the giant's eyes and killing him; and always afterwards, when in difficulty or danger, his thumb used to pain him, and on putting it to his mouth he obtained knowledge how to escape.

Compare this legend with the legend of Ceridwen, Hanes Taliessin, *Mabinogion*, vol. iii. pp. 322, 323., the coincidence of which is very curious. Where also did Shakspeare get the speech he makes one of the witches utter in *Macbeth*:—

> "By the *pricking of my thumbs*,
> Something wicked this way comes."

How Ussheen (Ossian) visited the Land of "Thiernah Ogieh" (the Country of perpetual Youth). — Once upon a time, when Ussheen was in the full vigour of his youth, it happened that, fatigued with the chace, and separated from his companions, he stretched himself under a tree to rest, and soon fell asleep. "Awaking with a start," he saw a lady, richly clothed and of more than mortal beauty, gazing on him; nor was it long until she made him understand that a warmer feeling than mere curiosity had attracted her; nor was Ussheen long in responding to it. The lady then explained that she was not of mortal birth, and that he who wooed an immortal bride must be prepared to encounter dangers such as would appal the ordinary race of men. Ussheen, without hesitation, declared his readiness to encounter any foe, mortal or immortal, that might be opposed to him in her service. The lady then declared herself to be the queen of "Thiernah Ogieh," and invited him to accompany her thither and share her throne. They then set out on their journey, one in all respects similar to that undertaken by Thomas the Rhymer and the queen of Faerie, and having overcome all obstacles, arrived at "the

land of perpetual youth," where all the delights of the terrestrial paradise were thrown open to Ussheen, to be enjoyed with only one restriction. A broad flat stone was pointed out to him in one part of the palace garden, on which he was forbidden to stand, under penalty of the heaviest misfortune. One day, however, finding himself near the fatal stone, the temptation to stand on it became irresistible, and he yielded to it, and immediately found himself in full view of his native land, the existence of which he had forgotten from the moment he had entered the kingdom of Thiernah Ogieh. But alas! how was it changed from that country he had left only a few days since, for " the strong had become weak," and " the brave become cowards," while oppression and violence held undisputed sway through the land. Overcome with grief, he hastened to the queen to beg that he might be restored to his country without delay, that he might endeavour to apply some remedy to its misfortunes. The queen's prophetic skill made her aware of Ussheen's transgression of her commands before he spoke, and she exerted all her persuasive powers to prevail upon him to give up his desire to return to Erin, but in vain. She then asked him how long he supposed he had been absent from his native land, and, on answering " thrice seven days," she amazed him by declaring that three times thrice seven years had elapsed since his arrival at the kingdom of Thiernah Ogieh; and though Time had no power to enter that land, it would immediately assert its dominion over him if he left it. At length she persuaded him to promise that he would return to his country for only one day, and then come back to dwell with her for ever; and she gave him a jet-black horse of surpassing beauty, from whose back she charged him on no account to alight, or at all events not to allow the bridle to fall from his hand. She farther endued him with wisdom and knowledge far surpassing that of men. Having mounted his fairy steed, he soon found himself approaching his former home; and as he journeyed he met a man driving before him a horse, across whose back was thrown

a sack of corn: the sack having fallen a little to one side, the man asked Ussheen to assist him in balancing it properly; Ussheen instantly stooped from his horse, and catching the sack in his right hand, gave it such a heave that it fell over on the other side. Annoyed at his mistake he forgot the injunctions of his bride, and sprang from his horse to lift the sack from the ground, letting the bridle fall from his hand at the same time; instantly the horse struck fire from the ground with his hoofs, and uttering a neigh louder than thunder, vanished; at the same instant his curling locks fell from Ussheen's head, darkness closed over his beaming eyes, the more than mortal strength forsook his limbs, and, a feeble helpless old man, he stretched forth his hands seeking some one to lead him: but the mental gifts bestowed on him by his immortal bride did not leave him, and, though unable to serve his countrymen with his sword, he bestowed upon them the advice and instruction which flowed from wisdom greater than that of mortals.

About nine miles westward from the town of Ennis, in the midst of some of the wildest scenery in Ireland, lies the small but very beautiful Lake of Inchiquin, famous throughout the neighbouring country for its red trout, and for being in winter the haunt of almost all the various kinds of waterfowl, including the wild swan, that are to be found in Ireland, while the woods that border one of its sides are amply stocked with woodcocks. At one extremity of the lake are the ruins of the Castle of Inchiquin, part of which is built on a rock projecting into the lake, there about one hundred feet deep, and this legend is related of the old castle: — Once upon a time, the chieftain of the Quins, whose stronghold it was, found in one of the caves (many of which are in the limestone hills that surround the lake) a lady of great beauty, fast asleep. While gazing on her in rapt admiration she awoke, and, according to the customs of the Heroic Age, soon consented to become his bride, merely stipulating that no one bearing the name of O'Brien should be allowed to enter the castle gate: this being agreed

to, the wedding was celebrated with all due pomp, and in process of time one lovely boy blessed their union. Among the other rejoicings at the birth of an heir to the chief of the clan, a grand hunting-match took place, and the chase having terminated near the castle, the chieftain, as in duty bound, requested the assembled nobles to partake of his hospitality. To this a ready assent was given, and the chiefs were ushered into the great hall with all becoming state; and then for the first time did their host discover that one bearing the forbidden name was among them. The banquet was served, and now the absence of the lady of the castle alone delayed the onslaught on the good things spread before them. Surprised and half afraid at her absence, her husband sought her chamber: on entering, he saw her sitting pensively with her child at the window which overlooked the lake; raising her head as he approached, he saw she was weeping, and as he advanced towards her with words of apology for having broken his promise, she sprang through the window with her child into the lake. The wretched man rushed forward with a cry of horror: for one moment he saw her gliding over the waters, now fearfully disturbed, chaunting a wild dirge, and then, with a mingled look of grief and reproach, she disappeared for ever! And the castle and the lordship, with many a broad acre besides, passed from the Quins, and are now the property of the O'Briens to this day; and while the rest of the castle is little better than a heap of ruins, the fatal window still remains nearly as perfect as when the lady sprang through it, an irrefragable proof of the truth of the legend in the eyes of the peasantry.

Fuenvicouil (Fingal) and the Giant.—Once upon a time, a Scottish giant who had heard of Fuenvicouil's fame, determined to come and see which of them was the stronger. Now Fuenvicouil was informed by his thumb of the giant's intentions, and also that on the present occasion matters would not turn out much to his advantage if they fought: so as he did not feel the least bit "blue-mowlded for the want of a batin'," like Neal Malone, he was at a loss what

to do. Oonagh, his wife, saw his distress, and soon contrived to find out the cause of it; and having done so, she assured him that if he would leave things to her management, and strictly obey her directions, she would make the giant return home faster than he came. Fuenvicouil promised obedience; and, as no time was to be lost, Oonagh commenced her preparations. She first baked two or three large cakes of bread, taking care to put the griddle (the iron plate used in Ireland and Scotland for baking bread on) into the largest. She then put several gallons of milk down to boil, and made whey of it; and carefully collected the curd into a mass, which she laid aside. She then proceeded to dress up Fuenvicouil as a baby; and having put a cap on his head, tucked him up in the cradle, charging him on no account to speak, but to carefully obey any signs she might make to him. The preparations were only just completed, when the giant arrived, and, striding into the house, demanded to see Fuenvicouil. Oonagh received him politely; said she could not tell *any more than the child in the cradle*, where her husband then was; but requested the giant to sit down and rest, till Fuenvicouil came in. She then placed bread and whey before him till some better refreshments could be got ready, taking care to give him the cake with the griddle in it, and serving the whey in a vessel that held two or three gallons. The giant was a little surprised at the *quantity* of the lunch set before him, and proceeded to break a piece off the cake, but in vain; he then tried to bite it, with as little success: and as to swallowing the ocean of whey set before him, it was out of the question; so he said he was not hungry, and would wait. He then asked Oonagh what was the favourite feat of strength her husband prided himself upon. She could not indeed particularise any one, but said that sometimes Fuenvicouil amused himself with squeezing water out of that stone there, pointing to a rock lying near the door. The giant immediately took it up; and squeezed it till the blood started from his fingers, but made no impression on the rock. Oonagh laughed at his discomfiture, and said a

child could do that, handing at the same time the lump of curds to "the baby." Fuenvicouil, who had been attentively listening to all that was going on, gave the curd a squeeze, and some drops of whey fell from it. Oonagh, in apparently great delight, kissed and hugged her "dear baby;" and breaking a bit off one of the cakes she had prepared, began to coax the "child" to eat a little bit and get strong. The giant amazed, asked, could that child eat such hard bread? And Oonagh persuaded him to put his finger into the child's mouth, "just to feel his teeth;" and as soon as Fuenvicouil got the giant's finger in his mouth, he bit it off. This was more than the giant could stand; and seeing that a child in the cradle was so strong, he was convinced that the sooner he decamped before Fuenvicouil's return the better; so he hastened from the house, while Oonagh in vain pressed him to remain, and never stopped till he returned to his own place, very happy at having escaped a meeting with Fuenvicouil.

The Lake of Inchiquin is said to have been once a populous and flourishing city, and still on a calm night you may see the towers and spires gleaming through the clear wave. But for some dreadful and unabsolved crime, a holy man of those days whelmed all beneath the deep waters. The "dark spirit" of its king, who ruled also over the surrounding country, resides in a cavern in one of the hills which border the lake, and once every seven years at midnight he issues forth mounted on his white charger, and urges him at full speed over hill and crag, until he has completed the circuit of the lake; and thus he is to continue, till the silver hoofs of his steed are worn out, when the curse will be removed, and the city reappear in all its splendour. The cave extends nearly a mile under the hill; the entrance is low and gloomy, but the roof rises to a considerable height for about half the distance, and then sinks down to a narrow passage, which leads into a somewhat lower division of the cave. The darkness, and the numbers of bats which flap their wings in the face of the explorer, and whirl round his taper, fail not to impress him with a sensation of awe.

A Cromwellian Legend.—In the west of Clare, for many miles the country seems to consist of nothing but fields of grey limestone flags, which gives it an appearance of the greatest desolation: Cromwell is reported to have said of it, "that there was neither wood in it to hang a man, nor water to drown him, nor earth to bury him!" The soil is not, however, by any means as barren as it looks; and the following legend is related of the way in which an ancestor of one of the most extensive landed proprietors in the county obtained his estates.

'Twas on a dismal evening in the depth of winter, that one of Cromwell's officers was passing through this part of the country; his courage and gallantry in the "good cause" had obtained for him a large grant of land in Clare, and he was now on his journey to it. Picturing to himself a land flowing with milk and honey, his disappointment may therefore be imagined when, at the close of a weary day's journey, he found himself bewildered amid such a scene of desolation. From the inquiries he had made at the last inhabited place he had passed, he was led to conclude that he could not be far distant from the "land of promise," where he might turn his sword into a pruning hook, and rest from all his toils and dangers. Could this be the place of which his imagination had formed so fair a vision? Hours had elapsed since he had seen a human being; and as the solitude added to the dismal appearance of the road, bitterly did the veteran curse the folly that had enticed him into the land of bogs and "Papistrie." Troublous therefore as the times were, the tramp of an approaching steed sent a thrill of pleasure through the heart of the Puritan. The rider soon joined him, and as he seemed peaceably disposed, they entered into conversation; and the stranger soon became acquainted with the old soldier's errand, and the disappointment he had experienced. Artfully taking advantage of the occasion, the stranger, who professed an acquaintance with the country, used every means to aggravate the disgust of his fellow-traveller, till the heart of the Cromwellian, already half overcome by fatigue and hunger, sank within him; and

at last he agreed that the land should transferred to the stranger for a butt of Claret and the horse on which he rode. As soon as this important matter was settled, the stranger conducted his new friend to a house of entertainment in a neighbouring hamlet, whose ruins are still called the Claret House of K——. A plentiful, though coarse, entertainment soon smoked on the board; and as the eye of the Puritan wandered over the "creature comforts," his heart rose, and he forgot his disappointment and his fatigue. It is even said that he dispensed with nearly ten of the twenty minutes which he usually bestowed on the benediction; but be this as it may, ere he retired to his couch — "vino ciboque gravatus" — the articles were signed, and the courteous stranger became possessed of one of the finest estates in the county!

Legend of the Castle of Ballyportree.—About two miles from the village of Corofin, in the west of Clare, are the ruins of the Castle of Ballyportree, consisting of a massive square tower surrounded by a wall, at the corners of which are smaller round towers: the outer wall was also surrounded by a ditch. The castle is still so far perfect that the lower part is inhabited by a farmer's family; and in some of the upper rooms are still remaining massive chimney pieces of grey limestone, of a very modern form, the horizontal portions of which are ornamented with a quatrefoil ornament engraved within a circle, but there are no dates or armorial bearings: from the windows of the castle four others are visible, none of them more than two miles from each other; and a very large cromlech is within a few yards of the castle ditch. The following legend is related of the castle:—When the Danes were building the castle (the Danes were the great builders, as Oliver Cromwell was the great destroyer of all the old castles, abbeys, &c. in Ireland), —when the Danes were building the Castle of Ballyportree, they collected workmen from all quarters, and forced them to labour night or day without stopping for food or rest; and according as any of them fell down from exhaustion, his body was thrown upon the wall, which was built up over

him! When the castle was finished, its inhabitants tyrannised over the whole country, until the time arrived when the Danes were finally expelled from Ireland. Ballyportree Castle held out to the last, but at length it was taken after a fierce resistance, only three of the garrison being found alive, who proved to be a father and his two sons; the infuriated conquerors were about to kill them also, when one of them proposed that their lives should be spared, and a free passage to their own country given them, on condition that they taught the Irishmen how to brew the famous ale from the heather—that secret so eagerly coveted by the Irish, and so zealously guarded by the Danes. At first neither promises nor threats had any effect on the prisoners, but at length the elder warrior consented to tell the secret on condition that his two sons should first be put to death before his eyes, alleging his fear, that when he returned to his own country, they might cause him to be put to death for betraying the secret. Though somewhat surprised at his request, the Irish chieftains immediately complied with it, and the young men were slain. Then the old warrior exclaimed, 'Fools! I saw that your threats and your promises were beginning to influence my sons; for they were but boys, and might have yielded: but now the secret is safe, your threats or your promises have no effect on me!" Enraged at their disappointment, the Irish soldiers hewed the stern northman in pieces, and the coveted secret is still unrevealed.

In the South of Scotland a legend, almost word for word the same as the above, is told of an old castle there, with the exception that, instead of Danes, the old warrior and his sons are called Pechts. After the slaughter of his sons the old man's eyes are put out, and he is left to drag on a miserable existence: he lives to an immense old age, and one day, when all the generation that fought with him have passed away, he hears the young men celebrating the feats of strength performed by one of their number; the old Pecht asks for the victor, and requests him to let him feel his wrist; the young man feigns compliance with his request, *but places an iron* crow-bar in the old man's hand instead

of his wrist; the old Pecht snaps the bar of iron in two with his fingers, remarking quietly to the astounded spectators, that "it is a gey bit gristle, and has not much pith in it yet." The story is told in the second volume of Chambers' *Edinburgh Journal*, first series, but I have not the volume at hand to refer to. The similarity between the two legends is curious and interesting.

Legend of Fuenvicouil at Tiermacbran.—About half a mile from the lake of Inchiquin is situated the small lake of Tiermacbran; high limestone cliffs nearly surround it, one of which is crowned with the picturesque ruins of an old castle, while the cliff immediately opposite has been occupied by the eyry of a falcon for many years: no stream appears to flow into or out of the lake. A solitary coot may generally be seen floating motionless in the dark sullen water, and a hawk hangs poised in mid air over it, or slowly circles round, uttering a harsh scream from time to time: altogether, a more *eerie* spot could not be easily found. The lake is popularly believed to be unfathomable, and though supposed to contain fish of fabulous size, it would not be easy to tempt the most zealous disciple of Izaak Walton among the peasantry to cast a line upon the sullen waters. The following legend accounts for the awe with which the lake is regarded. — Once upon a time Fuenvicouil (Fingal) went out with his attendant chieftains to hunt upon the heath-covered sides of Mount Callaw, famous as being the burial-place of Conan, whose monument with its Ogham inscription is still extant; a noble hart, snow-white, whose hoofs and horns shone like gold, was soon started, and eagerly did the chieftains urge their hounds in pursuit. Hour after hour passed on, and still the deer sped on with unabated vigour, while one by one hunter and hound dropped exhausted from the chace — till none were left but Fuenvicouil and his matchless hound, the snow-white Bran; and now, as the sun was fast declining, the wondrous hart reached the cliff over the lake where the ruins of the old castle now stand. A moment's pause, and it plunged into the lake, followed almost instantaneously by the gallant

hound: the moment the deer touched the water it vanished, while instead appeared a beautiful lady seated on the rippling waves, and as the noble dog rose to the surface from his plunge she laid her hand on his head and submerged him for ever! and then disappeared. Some relate in addition that she inflicted a curse on Fuenvicouil. In memory of the event the cliff from which the dog sprang is called "Craig-a-Bran;" while the lake and castle are called by the name of "Tiarnach Bran,"—"the lordship of Bran," corrupted in conversation to "Tir mac Bran." It is a curious fact that the "machinery" of this legend is so peculiarly that of the metrical romances (see *Partenopex of Blois*, &c.). Somewhat different versions of it are given in Miss Brooke's *Translations of Irish Poetry*, and in the spirited translations by Dr. Drummond; but as in Clare alone have the lake and cliff obtained names from the event, we may claim the legend as peculiar to that county. The old castle, once the property of the B——d family, whose mansion of R——n within a mile of it is still (strange to say for Ireland) inhabited by a member of the family, as it had been for the last three hundred years, was destroyed by lightning: most of the inhabitants had time to make their escape, but the heir of the family, a young child, was left behind, and more than a week afterwards was discovered alive and unhurt under the great table which stood in the great hall, and which now groaned under the mass of ruins instead of the rich banquets which used to grace its ample surface. This event took place only about sixty or seventy years ago. I have conversed with persons cognisant of the fact.

Ossian and St. Patrick.—When St. Patrick had, after many arguments, converted Ussheen (Ossian) to Christianity, he became a member of the saint's household, and, being now a feeble, blind old man, he had a servant to attend on him. It appears that Ussheen's appetite corresponded to his gigantic size, and that the saint's housekeeper dealt his portion with a niggard hand; for when the old warrior remonstrated with her one day on the scantiness of his meal, she tauntingly replied that his large oatcake, his quarter of beef, and his "mis-

cawn" of butter would amply suffice a better man.—"Ah," said he, "I could yet show you an *ivy leaf* broader than your cake, a *berry of the quick beam* larger than your miscawn, and the *leg of a blackbird* larger than your quarter of beef." The surly housekeeper, with the contempt often shown to the aged and poor, gave Ussheen the lie direct; but he remained silent. Some time after Ussheen directed his attendant to nail a raw hide against the wall, and to dash the puppies of a wolf-dog that had been lately littered against it: each in succession fell howling to the ground, except the last, which clung to the hide with tooth and nail. By Ussheen's desire he was taken and carefully reared, the milk of nine cows being appropriated to his use. When full-grown, Ussheen desired his attendant to conduct him to the plains of Kildare, and to lead the dog in a leash with them; as they went along, Ussheen at a certain place asked his guide if he beheld anything worthy of notice? and the boy replied, he saw an immense plant resembling ivy, that projected from a huge rock and nearly obscured the light of the sun; and also a large tree near a stream, bearing a red fruit of enormous size. Ussheen plucked a leaf from the plant and some fruit from the tree: soon after they reached the plain, and Ussheen asked again if his attendant saw anything? "Yes," replied the boy, "I see a rock of immense size:" he then desired to be led to the stone, and after removing it from its place by one effort of his gigantic strength, he took from under it a sling, a ball, and an ancient trumpet; sitting down upon the rock he desired his attendant to break down nine gaps in the wall that surrounded the plain, and then to retire behind him. At the same time he blew a blast on the trumpet that appeared to pervade earth and sky, and yet was of surpassing melody. After some time Ussheen ceased, and asked his attendant what he saw? "I perceive the heavens darkened with the flight of birds that approach from all quarters," said he. Ussheen again renewed the magic strain, when his companion exclaimed that a monstrous bird, whose bulk overshadowed the whole plain, was approaching. "That is the object of

our expectation," replied Ussheen; "let slip the dog as the bird alights." The wolf-dog bounded forward with open mouth to the combat, and the bird received his attack with great courage, while the thrilling blasts of the magic trumpet seemed to inspire the combatants with increasing fury; they fought all day, and at the going down of the sun, the victorious wolf-dog drank the blood of his fallen foe. "The bird is dead," said the affrighted servant, "and the dog, bathed in blood, is rushing towards us with open jaws to devour us!" "Direct my aim towards the dog," said the hero; then launching the ball from the sling, it entered the open jaws of the hound, and stretched him lifeless on the earth. The leaf, the fruit, and the leg of the bird were produced to the housekeeper as proofs of the veracity of the aged hero. This was his last exploit, for the legend goes on to relate that the repeated insults of this woman soon after broke the heart of the warrior bard, the last survivor of the race of the Feinian heroes. I have often thought it possible that some battle of the Irish against the Danish invaders was obscurely typified by this legend, which is a very favourite one in the county of Clare.

Gobawn Saer. — Among the most celebrated characters of antiquity, there is not one whose fame is more widely spread throughout Ireland than that of "Gobawn Saer," whose skill as an architect was only equalled by the lessons of wisdom which dropped from his lips, many of which are to this day current among the peasantry through the length and breadth of the land. "Once upon a time," as the Gobawn and his son were on their travels, they came to a place where there was a palace in progress of erection for the king of the country, and they turned aside to inspect the work. At the moment of their arrival the workmen were engaged in putting up the beams which joined together by pegs from the "couples" of the roof; this, from the height and size of the building, happened to be a most laborious and dangerous task. The Gobawn having looked on at their ill-planned efforts for some time, took up an axe, and *laying his glove* down as a block, quickly fashioned a

number of pegs; then flinging them up one by one to the places already pierced in the couples for their reception, he threw the hatchet at each, and drove it home with unerring aim; then taking up his glove uninjured, proceeded quietly on his way, leaving the workmen lost in amazement. The king came in presently, and having been told of the wonderful exploit, immediately declared that no one but the Gobawn Saer could have done this, and immediately despatched messengers to bring him back, and offer him any remuneration he might require to complete the building. The Gobawn, after some entreaty, returned with the messengers, and he and his son soon built a palace such as no king had hitherto possessed. Now it happened some time before they set out on their journey, the Gobawn thought it desirable that his son should take a wife; and as he preferred a woman who possessed sound sense and ready wit, rather than the factitious distinctions of birth or fortune, he took the following method of obtaining such a daughter-in-law as he wished for. Having killed a sheep, he desired his son to take the skin to the next town and sell it, charging him to *bring back the skin and the price of it.* To hear was to obey; but the young man wandered in vain through the town seeking a purchaser on the strange terms he required. At last, weary and disheartened, he was returning home towards evening, when he saw some girls washing clothes at the river outside the town. An Irishman never passes any persons at work without the salutation of "God bless the work." One of the girls, when answering his good wish, observed his wearied appearance, and soon drew from him the cause. After a moment's thought she at once agreed to purchase the skin on the proposed terms, and having brought him to her house, she took it, stripped off the wool, and returned the bare hide with the price stipulated, when the young man returned to his father and presented him with "the skin and the price of it." He immediately sent him to ask the young woman in marriage, and in a few days she was installed mistress of Rath Gobawn. Now that her husband and his father were setting

out on a journey she gave the former two sage counsels for his guidance and protection: first, she desired him, when his father was tired, to "shorten the road;" secondly, "not to sleep a third night in any house without having secured the favour of one of the females resident in it." The elder Gobawn having become weary with the length of his journey, his son would gladly have "shortened the road" for him, but did not know how, until his father, to whom he mentioned the conjugal precept, desired him to begin some legend or romance, and so by the interest of the story beguile the tediousness of the journey. In obedience to the second precept of his wife, before they had been two days at the king's palace the young man contrived to interest the king's daughter in his favour; and on his informing his father of the fact, the cautious old man desired him, as a means of discovering whether her attachment was a mere caprice of passion, or founded on a more firm basis, to sprinkle a few drops of water in her face when the basin was carried round to wash the guests' hands before sitting down to dinner: if she smiled, her love was sincere; but if she frowned, then was it a mere caprice of passion, and liable to be turned to hate or revenge. The young man did as his father desired, and when he playfully sprinkled the water on the lady's face she smiled gently, and the young man's mind was at rest. The palace now approached its completion, and the king determined to put the Gobawn and his son to death, so that no other prince should possess a building of equal magnificence: his daughter, however, found means to communicate her father's benevolent intentions to her lover. Whereupon the Gobawn set his wits to work to circumvent the base designs of his employer; and in an interview with the king he stated that the building, which was the most beautiful he had ever erected, required the application of one implement, which he had unfortunately left at home, and requested permission to return for it. The king, however, could not think of allowing him to take the journey, but offered to send for the instrument. But the Gobawn declared that it was too valuable to be

entrusted to any messenger. At length, after much debate, the Gobawn consented to allow the king's only son to go for the instrument, which he was to ask for from his daughter-in-law by the name of "Cur-an-aigh-an-cuim." This sentence, which has since become proverbial in Ireland, excited the suspicions of the mistress of Rath Gobawn, and by some artfully planned inquiries she obtained sufficient information to convince her that her husband and father-in-law were in danger from the treachery of their employer. Concealing her thoughts, however, she promised to give the prince the object of his journey; meantime refreshments were set before him, and when the fascination of her discourse had completely thrown him off his guard, she caused him to be seized by her domestics, and thrown into the dungeon of the fort. The king, his father, having been duly informed of the situation of his only son, was compelled to forego his treacherous designs, and to dismiss the Gobawn Saer and his son with rich presents, and on their safe arrival at home the prince was set at liberty.

FRANCIS ROBERT DAVIES.

A story almost identical with the legend by MR. DAVIES, (page 100,) appeared years ago under the name of *The White Horse of the Peppers*, written by Samuel Lover; the main difference appears to be that Lover's tale is of a Jacobite in the co. Meath, MR. DAVIES' of a Cromwellian in the co. Clare. The Peppers of Ballygarth Castle are well known in Meath to this day. MR. DAVIES will perhaps mention the name of the Clare family.

Y. S. M.—(Vol. ii. p. 455.)

To this query MR. DAVIES replied as follows:

As the family are still in possession of the property said to have been gained so cleverly, I do not feel quite disposed to publish the name. The village where the event took place was named Kilfenora, remarkable for its very ancient Cathedral, and for several stone crosses, some of which were removed to Claresford House, Killaloe (the Bishop's palace), by the late Dr. Mant, who had been Bishop of Killalloe and

Kilfenora, before he was translated to the See of Down. I heard the legend many years ago from the same authority from which I derived nearly all the others published from time to time in "N. & Q."; and as a further proof of its being a genuine co. Clare legend, I referred to one of the earlier volumes of the *Christian Examiner* (the fourth I think), where, under the head of legends of C—— co. Clare, will be found this legend related in nearly the same words, (having been derived from the same authority,) by a gentleman who is member of a family holding deservedly high stations in the Irish Bar and Church; and as the book referred to was published many years before Mr. Lover had come before the public eye, it is pretty good proof that two circumstances of a somewhat similar nature may have occurred in the "Troublous Times" to which Ireland has been subject for so many generations: besides, my legend refers to the age of Oliver Cromwell, and Mr. Lover's to the week after the Battle of the Boyne.

FRANCIS ROBERT DAVIES.

FOLK LORE IN THE REIGN OF KING JAMES I.

In turning over the pages of an old book of controversial divinity, I stumbled upon the following illustrations of folk lore; which, as well from their antiquity as from their intrinsic curiosity, seem worthy of a place in your columns. They make us acquainted with some of the usages of our ancestors, who lived in the remoter districts of England early in the reign of James I. The title of the volume in which they occur is the following:

"The Way to the True Church; wherein the principall Motives persuading to Romanisme, and Questions touching the Nature and Authoritie of the Church and Scriptures, are familiarly disputed . . . . directed to all that seeke for Resolution; and especially to all his loving Countrymen of Lancashire, by *John White*, Minister of God's Word at Eccles. Folio. London, 1624."

This, however, is described as being "the fifth impression;" *the Preface* is dated Oct. 29, 1608; so that we arrive at the

conclusion that the usages and rhymes, to which I now desire to invite the attention of your readers, were current in the north-west districts of England more than two hundred and fifty years since.

White is insisting upon "the prodigious ignorance" which he found among his parishioners when he entered upon his ministrations, and he proceeds thus to tell his own tale:

"I will only mention what I saw and learned, dwelling among them, concerning the saying of their prayers; for what man is he whose heart trembles not to see simple people so far seduced that they know not how to pronounce or say their daily prayers; or so to pray that all that hear them shall be filled with laughter? And while, superstitiously, they refuse to pray in their own language with understanding, they speak that which their leaders may blush to hear. These examples I have observed from the common people."

THE CREED.

"Creezum zuum patrum onitentem creatorum [illegible] anicum, Dominum nostrum qui sum sops, virgini Mariæ, crixua fixus, Ponchi Pilati audubitiers, morti by sonday, father a fernes, sceleresi un judicarum, finis a mortibus. Creezum spirituum sanctum, ecli Catholi, remissaurum, peccaturum, communiorum obliviorum, bitam et turnam again."

THE LITTLE CREED.

"Little Creed, can I need,
Kneele before our Ladie's knee;
Candle light, candles burne,
Our Ladie pray'd to her deare Sonne,
That we might all to heaven come.
Little Creed, Amen."

"This that followeth they call the 'White Pater-noster;'

"White Pater-noster, Saint Peter's brother,
What hast i' th t'one hand? white booke leaves.
What hast i' th t'other hand? heaven yate keyes.
Open heaven yates, and steike [shut] hell yates:
And let every crysome child creepe to its owne mother.
White Pater-noster, Amen."

"Another Prayer:

"I blesse me with God and the rood,
With his sweet flesh and precious blood;

With his crosse and his creed,
With his length and his breed,
From my toe to my crowne,
And all my body up and downe,
From my back to my brest,
My five wits be my rest;
God let never ill come at ill,
But through Jesus owne will,
Sweet Jesus, Lord. Amen."

"Many also use to weare vervein against blasts; and when they gather it for this purpose, firste they crosse the herbe with their hand, and then they blesse it thus:

"Hallowed be thou, Vervein,
As thou growest on the ground,
For in the Mount of Cavalry,
There thou wast first found.
Thou healedst our Saviour Jesus Christ,
And stanchedst his bleeding wound;
In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,
I take thee from the ground."

These passages may be seen in the "Preface to the Reader," § 13., no page, but on the reverse of Sig. A 4.

It might at first appear somewhat strange that these interesting remnants of early belief should have escaped the notice of your numerous correspondents, whose attention has for so long a period been directed to this inquiry: but this may be accounted for if we remember that the volume in which they occur is one which would seem, *primâ facie*, least likely to afford any such materials. It is one of those uninviting bulky folios of which the reigns of James and Charles I. furnish us with so many specimens. Here we might fairly expect to discover abundant illustrations of patristic and scholastic theology, of learning and pedantry, of earnest devotion, and ill-temper no less earnest; but nothing whereby to illustrate the manners or customs, the traditions, or the popular usages or superstitions, of the common people. This may be a hint for us, however, to direct our attention to a class of literature which hitherto has scarcely received *the attention* to which it would appear to be entitled; and

I would venture to express my conviction, that if those who are interested in the illustration of our popular antiquities were to give a little of their time to early English theology, the result would be more important than might at first be anticipated. L. B.—(Vol. viii. p. 613.)

SUFFOLK LEGEND.

In the little village of Acton, Suffolk, a legend was current not many years ago, that on certain occasions, which, by the way, were never accurately defined, the park gates were wont to fly open at midnight "withouten hands," and a carriage drawn by four spectral horses, and accompanied by headless grooms and outriders, proceeded with great rapidity from the park to a spot called "the nursery corner." What became of the ghostly *cortège* at this spot, I have never been able to learn; but though the sight has not been seen by any of the present inhabitants, yet some of them have heard the noise of the headlong race. The "Corner" tradition says, it is the spot where a very bloody engagement took place, in olden time, when the Romans were governors of England. A few coins have, I believe, been found, but nothing else confirmatory of the tale. Does history in any way support the story of the battle? Whilst writing on this subject, I may as well note, that near this haunted corner is a pool called Wimbell Pond, in which tradition says an iron chest of money is concealed: if any daring person ventures to approach the pond, and throw a stone into the water, it will ring against the chest; and a small white figure has been heard to cry in accents of distress, "That's mine!"

I send you these legends as I have heard them from the lips of my nurse, a native of the village.

W. Sparrow Simpson, B.A.—(Vol. v. p. 195.)

SUFFOLK FOLK LORE.

I send you a few articles on "Folk Lore," now, or not long ago, current in the county of Suffolk, in addition to what is to be found in the latter part of the second volume of Forby's *Vocabulary of East Anglia.*

1. To ascertain whether her pretended lovers really love her or not, the maiden takes an apple-pip, and naming one of her followers, puts the pip in the fire. If it makes a noise in bursting from the heat, it is a proof of love; but if it is consumed without a crack, she is fully satisfied that there is no real regard towards her in the person named.

2. "I remember the wooing of a peascod instead of her." (*Shakesp.*) — The efficacy of peascods in the concerns of sweethearts is not yet forgotten among our rustic vulgar. The kitchen-maid, when she shells green peas, never omits, when she finds one having *nine* peas, to lay it on the lintel of the kitchen door; and the first clown who enters it is infallibly to be her husband, or at least her sweetheart.

3. If you have your clothes mended upon your back, you will be ill spoken of.

4. If you sweep the house with blossomed broom in May,
   Y're sure to sweep the head of the house away.

Similar to which is the following: —

5. To sleep in a room with the whitethorn bloom in it during the month of May, will surely be followed by some great misfortune.

6. *Cure for fits.* — If a young woman has fits, she applies to ten or a dozen unmarried men (if the sufferer be a man, he applies to as many maidens) and obtains from each of them a small piece of silver of any kind, as a piece of a broken spoon, or ring, or brooch, buckle, and even sometimes a small coin, and a penny; the twelve pieces of silver are taken to a silversmith or other worker in metal, who forms therefrom a ring, which is to be worn by the person afflicted. If any of the silver remains after the ring is *made,* the workman has it as his perquisite; and the twelve

pennies also are intended as the wages for his work, and he must charge no more.

In 1830 I went into a gunsmith's shop in the village where I then resided, and seeing some fragments of silver in a saucer, I had the curiosity to inquire about them, when I was informed that they were the remains of the contributions for a ring for the above purpose which he had lately been employed to make. D.—(Vol. ii. p. 4.)

THE SPIRIT AT BOLINGBROKE CASTLE.

The following is copied from Harl. MS. 6829., which is a volume of notes on Lincolnshire churches, containing much of great value: —

"BOLLINGBROKE.

"One thinge is not to be passed by, affirmed as a certain trueth by many of y^e^ Inhabitants of the towne upon their own knowledge, which is, that y^e^ Castle is Haunted by a certain spirit in the Likeness of a Hare, which at y^e^ meeting of y^e^ Auditors doeth usually runne between their legs, and sometymes overthrows them, and so passes away. They have pursued it downe into y^e^ Castle yard, and seene it take in at a grate into a low Cellar, and have followed it thither with a light, where notwithstanding that they did most narrowly observe it [and that there was noe other passage out, but by y^e^ doore, or windowe, y^e^ room being all above framed of stones within, not having y^e^ least Chinke or Creuice], yet they could never find it. And at other tymes it hath beene seene run in at the Iron-Grates below into other of y^e^ Grottos [as thir be many of them], and they have watched the place and sent for Houndes and put in after it, but after a while they have come crying out." —162.

EDWARD PEACOCK, Jun.—(Vol. vi. p. 144.)

THE LAWYERS' PATRON SAINT.

"And now because I am speakeing of Pettyfogers, give me leave to tell you a story I mett with when I lived in Rome. Goeing with a Romane to see some Antiquityes, he showed me a chapell dedicated to one St. Evona, a lawyer of Brittanie, who he said came to Rome to entreat the Pope

to give the Lawyers of Brittanie a Patron, to which the Pope replied, That he knew of no Saint but what was disposed of to other Professions. At which Evona was very sad, and earnestly begd of the Pope to think of one for him. At last the Pope proposed to St. Evona that he should goe round the church of St. John de Latera blindfould, and after he had said so many Ave Marias, that the first Saint he layd hold of should be his Patron, which the good old Lawyer willingly undertook; and at the end of his Ave-Maryes he stopt at Saint Michels altar, where he laid hold of the Divell, under St. Michels feet, and cryd out, This is our Saint, let him be our Patron. So being unblindfolded, and seeing what a Patron he had chosen, he went to his lodgings so dejected, that in few moneths after he die'd, and coming to heaven's gates knockt hard. Whereupon St. Peter asked who it was that knockd so bouldly. He replyed, That he was St. Evona the Advocate. Away, away, said St. Peter; here is but one Advocate in heaven; here is no room for you Lawyers. O but, said St. Evona, I am that honest Lawyer who never tooke fees on both sides, or pleaded in a bad cause, nor did I ever set my Naibours together by the Eares, or lived by the sins of the people. Well then, said St. Peter, come in. This news comeing down to Rome, a witty Poet writ upon St. Evona's tomb these words: —

'St. Evona un Briton,
Advocat non Larron,
Halæluiah.'

" This story put me in mind of Ben Johnson goeing throw a church in Surry, seeing poore people weeping over a grave, asked one of the women why they wept. Oh, said shee, we have lost our pretious lawyer, Justice Randall; he kept us all in peace, and always was so good as to keep us from goeing to law: the best man ever lived. Well, said Ben Johnson, I will send you an epitaph to write on his Tomb, which was,—

'God works wonders now and then,
Here lyes a lawyer an honest man.'"

Carr's Remarks of the Government of the several parts of Germanie, Denmark, &c. 24mo. Amsterdam, 1688, pp. 80. 83.—(Vol. i. p. 151.)

DEATH-BED SUPERSTITIONS.

When a curate in Exeter I met with the following superstition, which I do not remember to have seen noticed before. I had long visited a poor man, who was dying of a very painful disease, and was daily expecting his death. Upon calling one morning to see my poor friend, his wife informed me that she thought he would have died during the night, and consequently she and her friends unfastened *every lock in the house*. On my inquiring the reason, I was told that any bolt or lock fastened was supposed to cause uneasiness to, and hinder the departure of the soul, and consequently upon the approach of death all the boxes, doors, &c., in the house were unlocked. Can any of your readers tell me whether this is in any way a general superstition amongst the lower orders, or is it confined to the West of England? R. H. — (Vol. i. p. 315.)

[This remarkable superstition forms the subject of a communication to the *Athenæum* (No. 990.) of 17th Oct. 1846: in a comment upon which it is there stated "that it originates from the belief which formerly prevailed that the soul flew out of the mouth of the dying in the likeness of a bird."]

The practice of opening doors and boxes when a person dies, is founded on the idea that the ministers of purgatorial pains took the soul as it escaped from the body, and flattening it against some closed door (which alone would serve the purpose), crammed it into the hinges and hinge openings; thus, the soul in torment was likely to be miserably squeezed by the movement, on casual occasion, of such door or lid: an open or swinging door frustrated this, and the fiends had to try some other locality. The friends of the departed were at least assured that they were not made the unconscious instruments of torturing the departed in their daily occupations. The superstition pre-

vails in the North, as well as the West of England; and a similar one exists in the south of Spain. Among the Jews at Gibraltar there is also a strange custom when a death occurs in a house, and this consists in pouring away all the water contained in any vessel, the superstition being that the angel of death may have washed his sword therein.

TREBOR. — (Vol. i. p. 467.)

See *Guy Mannering*, ch. xxvii. and note upon it: —

"The popular idea that the protracted struggle between life and death is painfully prolonged by keeping the door of the apartment shut, was received as certain by the superstitious eld of Scotland."

In West Gloucestershire they throw open the windows at the moment of death.

The notion of the escape of the soul through an opening is probably only in part the origin of this superstition. It will not account for opening *all* the locks in the house. There is, I conceive, a notion of analogy and association.

"Nexosque et solveret artus," says Virgil, at the death of Dido. They thought the soul, or the life, was tied up, and that the unloosing of any knot might help to get rid of the principle, as one may call it. For the same superstition prevailed in Scotland as to marriage (Dalyell, p. 302.). Witches cast knots on a cord; and in a parish in Perthshire both parties, just before marriage, had every knot or tie about them loosened, though they immediately proceeded, in private, severally to tie them up again. And as to the period of childbirth, see the grand and interesting ballad in Walter Scott's *Border Poems*, vol. ii. p. 27., "Willye's Lady."

C. B. — (Vol. iv. p. 350.)

In conversation with an aged widow, as devout and sensible as she is unlettered, I yesterday learned a death-bed mystery which appeared new to me, and which (if not more commonly known than I take it to be) you may perhaps think worthy of a place in "N. & Q." My informant's "religio" (as she appears to have derived it by tradition from her mother, and as confirmed by her own experience in case of a father, a husband, several children, and others),

is to the effect that a considerable interval *invariably* elapses between the first semblance of death, and what she considers to be the departure of the soul.

About five minutes after the time when death, to all outward appearance, has taken place, "the last breath," as she describes, may be seen to issue with a vapour, or "steam," out of the mouth of the departed.

The statement reminds me of Webster's argument, in his *Display of supposed Witchcraft*, chap. xvi., where, writing of the bleeding of corpses in presence of their murderers, he observes: —

"If we physically consider the union of the soul with the body by the mediation of the spirit, then we cannot rationally conceive that the soul doth utterly forsake that union, until by putrefaction, tending to an absolute mutation, it is forced to bid farewell to its beloved tabernacle; for its not operating *ad extra* to our senses, doth not necessarily infer its total absence. And it may be, that there is more in that of *Abel's blood crying unto the Lord from the ground*, in a physical sense, than is commonly conceived," &c.

Sir Kenelm Digby (I think) has also made some curious remarks on this subject, in his observations on the *Religio Medici* of Sir T. Brown. J. SANSOM.— (Vol. ii. p. 51.)

It may perhaps interest Mr. SANSOM to be informed that the appearance described to him is mentioned as a known fact in one of the works of the celebrated mystic, Jacob Behmen, *The Three Principles*, chap. 19, "Of the going forth of the Soul." I extract from J. Sparrow's translations, London, 1648.

"Seeing then that Man is so very earthly, therefore he hath none but earthly knowledge; except he be regenerated in the Gate of Deep. He always supposeth that the Soul (at the deceasing of the Body) goeth only out at the Mouth, and he understandeth nothing concerning its deep Essences above the Elements. *When he seeth a blue Vapor go forth out of the Mouth of a dying Man* (which maketh a strong smell all over the chamber), then he supposeth that is the Soul."

A. ROFFE.— (Vol. ii. p. 356.)

Whilst residing at the village of Charlcombe, near Bath, in the year 1852, a village well known to the ecclesiologists

for its diminutive church, said to be the smallest in England, a curious circumstance came to my knowledge. The parish clerk made application to the clergyman for the loan of the paten belonging to the church. Being asked for what purpose, he said he wanted it to put salt on, and to place it on the breast of a dying person to make him "die easier."

Is not this a trace of some old use of "blessed salt" in the mediæval Church? W. N. T.—(Vol. ii. p. 7.)

Caius College, Cambridge.

The above note produced the following communication from the Rev. Edmund Ward Pears:—

An extract from your paper having been extensively copied, I beg to state that the whole story is a misrepresentation, no doubt unintentional. I was the clergyman of Charlcombe at the time alluded to, and no death took place in the parish during the year 1852; but in 1850 the clerk came to me to borrow, not the plate, for there was none, but a pewter plate to place it on the body of a person *already dead*, to prevent the body swelling. It is true I used the plate as a paten, but it was asked for simply because it was pewter; so that it might be a case of quackery, but not of superstition; and I think it is plain to any one that a dying person could hardly bear a pewter plate filled with salt upon his chest, and if placed there it would be much more likely to hasten death than to alleviate it. Edmund Ward Pears.—(Vol. ii. p. 91.)

It is the common custom in Wales to borrow, if there should not be one belonging to the house, a deep pewter plate, which, filled with salt, is placed on the body of a deceased person as soon as possible after the corpse is laid out. The reason generally given is, that it will prevent the swelling of the body. N.—(Vol. ii. p. 135.)

I remember to have seen hanging up in the entrance of a relative's house at Clapham, many years ago, a large brass shallow dish, with a representation (cast in the metal) of Adam, Eve, the serpent, the Tree, &c. Inquiring the use of so curious-looking an article, I was told that such vessels *were not* uncommon in the houses of old families in Hert-

fordshire, and it was generally placed, filled with salt, immediately *after death*, upon the breast of the deceased member of the family. W. P.— (Vol. ii. p. *55*.)

I knew an intelligent, well-informed gentleman in Scotland, who, among the last injunctions on his death-bed, ordered that as soon as he expired the house clock was to be stopped, which was strictly obeyed. His reason for this I never could fathom, except that it was to impress upon his family the solemnity of the circumstance, and that with him "time was no longer."

A curious practice once existed, that in the room of the house of the diseased where the company met to attend the funeral, every clear or shining object was covered with white cloths, as looking-glasses, pictures, &c., the intention of which was probably no more than that the attention should not be diverted from the occasion.

In Scotland, where no funeral service is performed at the grave's mouth, the company usually wait on till the corpse is lowered into its resting-place, when each person touches or lifts his hat, which ceremony may be understood as a simple mark of respect both to the deceased and to his relations present.

The number of persons invited to attend funerals are of late years much reduced. It was once not unusual, when the head of a respectable family died, to issue letters to at least one hundred individuals, those with whom he had dealt in business and had been acquainted during his life. The prayers or religious services in the house are also much shortened, and the *refreshment* confined to a glass of wine and a biscuit; with "abstinence" parties nothing at all is offered. The time has been when to attend a country funeral was what may be called a favourable opportunity for getting the worse of liquor; firstly, to each a large glass of whisky, with bread and cheese; secondly, an equal supply of rum, with "burial bread;" and, thirdly, wine *ad libitum*. I have heard of pipes and tobacco being distributed, but this has never come under my observation.

G. N.—(Vol. ii. p. 215.)

sidered a Presage of impending Calamity or Death," reminded me of a collection of authorities I once made, for academical purposes, of a somewhat analogous bearing,—I mean the ancient belief in the existence of a power of prophecy at that period which immediately precedes dissolution.

The most ancient, as well as the most striking instance, is recorded in the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis: —

"And Jacob called his sons and said, Gather yourselves together *that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.* . . . . And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into his bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people."

Homer affords two instances of a similar kind: thus, Patroclus prophesies the death of Hector (*Il.* π. 852.) *: —

"Οὔ θην οὐδ' αὐτὸς δηρὸν βέῃ, ἀλλά τοι ἤδη
Ἄγχι παρέστηκε Θάνατος καὶ Μοῖρα κραταιὴ,
Χερσὶ δαμέντ' Ἀχιλῆος ἀμύμονος Αἰακίδαο." †

Again, Hector in his turn prophesies the death of Achilles by the hand of Paris (*Il.* χ. 358.): —

"Φράζεο νῦν, μή τοί τι θεῶν μήνιμα γένωμαι
Ἥματι τῷ, ὅτε κέν σε Πάρις καὶ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων,
Ἐσθλὸν ἐόντ', ὀλέσωσιν ἐνὶ Σκαιῇσι πύλῃσιν." ‡

This was not merely a poetical fancy, or a superstitious faith of the ignorant, for we find it laid down as a great physical truth by the greatest of the Greek philosophers, the divine Socrates :—

"Τὸ δὲ δὴ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐπιθύμω ὑμῖν χρησμωδῆσαι, ὦ καταψηφισάμενοι

* For the assistance of the general reader, I have introduced hasty eve... ations of the several passages quoted.

Sund... d I moreover tell you, and do you meditate well upon it, the mos... ourself are not destined to live long, for even now death ...igh unto you, and a violent fate awaits you,—about to Winchester... t by the hands of Achilles, the irreproachable son of

whether I may not be to you the cause of divine
...hen Paris and Phœbus Apollo shall slay you,
Scæan gate.

μου· καὶ γάρ εἰμι ἤδη ἐνταῦθα ἐν ᾧ μάλιστ' ἄνθρωποι χρησμωδοῦσιν ὅταν μέλλωσιν ἀποθανεῖσθαι." *

In Xenophon, also, the same idea is expressed, and, if possible, in language still more definite and precise: —

"Ἡ δὲ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ψυχὴ τότε δήπου θειοτάτη καταφαίνεται, καὶ τότε τι τῶν μελλόντων προορᾷ." †

Diodorus Siculus, again, has produced great authorities on this subject: —

"Πυθαγόρας ὁ Σάμιος, καὶ τινες ἕτεροι τῶν παλαιῶν φυσικῶν, ἀπεφήναντο τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὑπάρχειν ἀθανάτους, ἀκολούθως δὲ τῷ δόγματι τούτῳ καὶ προγιγνώσκειν αὐτὰς τὰ μέλλοντα, καθ' ὃν ἂν καιρὸν ἐν τῇ τελευτῇ τὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος χωρισμὸν ποιῶνται." ‡

From the ancient writers I yet wish to add one more authority; and I do so especially, because the doctrine of the Stagirite is therein recorded. Sextus Empiricus writes, —

"Ἡ ψυχή, φησὶν Ἀριστοτέλης, προμαντεύεται καὶ προαγόρευει τὰ μέλλοντα —ἐν τῷ κατὰ θάνατον χωρίζεσθαι τῶν σωμάτων." §

Without encroaching further upon the space of this periodical by multiplying evidence corroborative of the same fact, I will content myself by drawing the attention of the reader to our own great poet and philosopher, Shakspeare, whose subtle genius and intuitive knowledge of human nature render his opinions on all such subjects of peculiar value. Thus in *Richard II.*, Act ii. sc. 1., the dying Gaunt,

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* Wherefore I have an earnest desire to prophesy to you who have condemned me; for I am already arrived at that stage of my ex-y ence in which, especially, men utter prophetic sayings, that is ssays they are about to die.

† That time, indeed, the soul of man appears to be ollege of divine, for to a certain extent it foresees things wh- ii. p. 196.) happen.

‡ Pythagoras the Samian, and some others supplied by your sophers, showed that the souls of men were wing from Tertul- sessed a knowledge of futurity. 741., ed. Migne, Paris,

§ The soul, says Aristotle, wh- parture from the body, fore- ivortio potentius agitari, sollicitiore happen. itate, dum ex majori suggestu, jam in

alluding to his nephew, the young and self-willed king, exclaims, —

> "Methinks I am a prophet new inspired;
> And thus, expiring, do foretel of him."

Again, in *Henry IV., Part I.*, Act v. sc. 4., the brave Percy, when in the agonies of death, conveys the same idea in the following words: —

> "O, I could prophesy,
> But that the earthy and cold hand of death
> Lies on my tongue."

Reckoning, therefore, from the time of Jacob, this belief, whether with or without foundation, has been maintained upwards of 3500 years. It was grounded on the assumed fact, that the soul became divine in the same ratio as its connection with the body was loosened or destroyed. In sleep, the unity is weakened but not ended: hence, in sleep, the material being dead, the immaterial, or divine principle, wanders unguided, like a gentle breeze over the unconscious strings of an Æolian harp; and according to the health or disease of the body are pleasing visions or horrid phantoms (*ægri somnia*, as Horace) present to the mind of the sleeper. Before death, the soul, or immaterial principle, is, as it were, on the confines of two worlds, and may possess at the same moment a power which is both prospective and retrospective. At that time its connection with the body being merely nominal, it partakes of that perfectly ethereal, and exalted nature (*quod multo magis faciet quum omnino corpore excesserit*) which is de-

* For the[illegible] hereafter.

eve[illegible]ations o[illegible]

Sund[illegible]d I mo[illegible]on is an interesting one, I conclude by ask-the mos[illegible]ourself, medium of "N. AND Q.," if a belief in [illegible]igh unt[illegible]ecy before death be known to exist at Winchester, by the L[illegible]

[illegible]US GUEST. — (Vol. 2. p. 116.)

whether I ma[illegible]

[illegible]hen Paris and

Scæan gate. ' and gentle cousin, Mow-

Mowbray. You wish me health in very happy season;
For I am, on the sudden, something ill.
Archbishop of York. Against ill chances, men are ever merry;
But heaviness foreruns the good event.
West. Therefore be merry, coz; since sudden sorrow
Serves to say thus,—Some good thing comes to-morrow.
Arch. Believe me, I am passing light in spirit.
Mow. So much the worse, if your own rule be true."
Second Part of *King Henry IV.*, Act iv. sc. 2.

In the last act of *Romeo and Juliet*, sc. 1., Romeo comes on, saying, —

"If I may trust the flattering eye of sleep,
My dreams presage some joyful news at hand:
My bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne;
And, all this day, an unaccustom'd spirit
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts."

Immediately a messenger comes in to announce Juliet's death.

In Act iii. sc. 2., of *King Richard III.*, Hastings is represented as rising in the morning in unusually high spirits. This idea runs through the whole scene, which is too long for extraction. Before dinner-time he is beheaded.

X. Z. — (Vol. ii. p. 150.)

Mr. Aug. Guest will perhaps accept — as a small tribute to his interesting communication on the subject of that "power of prophecy" which I apprehend to be still believed by many to exist during certain lucid intervals before death — a reference to Sir Henry Halford's *Essay on the* Καῦσος *of Aretæus.* (See Sir H. Halford's *Essays and Orations read and delivered at the Royal College of Physicians*, Lond. 1831, pp. 93. et seq.)

J. Sansom. —(Vol. ii. p. 196.)

To the passages on this subject lately supplied by your correspondents, may be added the following from Tertullian, *De Animâ*, c. 53. (vol. ii. col. 741., ed. Migne, Paris, 1844): —

"Evenit sæpe animam in ipso divortio potentius agitari, sollicitiore obtutu, extraordinariâ loquacitate, dum ex majori suggestu, jam in

libero constituta, per superfluum quod adhuc cunctatur in corpore enuntiat quæ videt, quæ audit, quæ incipit nosse."

J. C. R. — (Vol. ii. p. 435.)

DRILLS PRESAGING DEATH.

In Norfolk, agricultural labourers generally believe that if a drill go from one end of a field to the other without depositing any seed — an accident which may result from the tubes and coulters clogging with earth — some person connected with the farm will die before the year expires, or before the crop then sown is reaped. It is a useful superstition, as it causes much attention to be paid to make the drill perform its work correctly. Still it is remarkable that such a superstition should have arisen, considering the recent introduction of that machine into general use. I should be glad to learn from other readers of "N. & Q." whether this belief prevails in other parts of England where the drill is generally used. E. G. R. — (Vol. vii. p. 353.)

Your correspondent asks if the superstition he alludes to in Norfolk is believed in other parts. I can give him a case in point in Berkshire: — Some twenty years ago an old gentleman died there, a near relative of my own; and on going down to his place, I was told by a farm overseer of his, that he was certain some of his lordship's family would die that season, as, in the last sowing, he had missed putting the seed in one row, which he showed me! "Who could disbelieve it now?" quoth the old man. I was then taken to the bee-hives, and at the door of every one this man knocked with his knuckles, and informed the occupants that they must now work for a new master, as their old one was gone to heaven. I know the same superstition is still extant in Cheshire, North Wales, and in some parts of Scotland. T. W. N.

Malta.

A friend supplies me with the information that before drills were invented, the labourers considered it unlucky to miss a "bout" in corn or seed sowing, which sometimes

happened when "broadcast" was the only method. The ill-luck did not relate alone to a *death* in the family of the farmer or his dependants, but to losses of cattle or accidents. It is singular, however, that the superstition should have transferred itself to the drill; but it will be satisfactory to E. G. R. to learn that the process of *tradition* and *superstition-manufacturing* is not going on in the nineteenth century. E. S. Taylor.—(Vol. vii. p. 522.)

THE EVIL EYE.

Going one day into a cottage in the village of Catterick, in Yorkshire, I observed hung up behind the door a ponderous necklace of "lucky stones," *i.e.* stones with a hole through them. On hinting an inquiry as to their use, I found the good lady of the house disposed to shuffle off any explanation; but by a little importunity I discovered that they had the credit of being able to preserve the house and its inhabitants from the baneful influence of the "evil eye." "Why, Nanny," said I, "you surely don't believe in witches now-a-days?" "No! I don't say 'at I do; but certainly i' former times there *was* wizzards an' buzzards, and them sort o' things." "Well," said I, laughing, "but you surely don't think there are any now?" "No! I don't say 'at ther' are; but I *do* believe in a *yevil* eye." After a little time I extracted from poor Nanny more particulars on the subject, as viz.:— how that there was a woman in the village whom she strongly suspected of being able to look with an evil eye; how, further, a neighbour's daughter, against whom the old lady in question had a grudge owing to some love affair, had suddenly fallen into a sort of pining sickness, of which the doctors could make nothing at all; and how the poor thing fell away without any accountable cause, and finally died, nobody knew why; but how it was her (Nanny's) strong belief that she had pined away in consequence of a glance from the evil eye. Finally, I got from her an account of how any one who chose could them-

selves obtain the power of the evil eye, and the receipt was, as nearly as I can recollect, as follows:—

"Ye gang out ov' a night—ivery night, while ye find nine toads—an' when ye've gitten t' nine toads, ye hang 'em up ov' a string, an' ye make a hole and buries t' toads i't hole—and as 't toads pines away, so 't person pines away 'at you've looked upon wiv a yevil eye, an' they pine and pine away while they die, without ony disease at all!"

I do not know if this is the orthodox creed respecting the mode of gaining the power of the evil eye, but it is at all events a genuine piece of Folk Lore.

The above will corroborate an old story rife in Yorkshire, of an ignorant person, who, being asked if he ever said his prayers, repeated as follows:—

"From witches and wizards and long-tail'd buzzards,
And creeping things that run in hedge-bottoms,
Good Lord, deliver us."

MARGARET GATTY.—(Vol. i. p. 429.)

Ecclesfield.

This superstition is still prevalent in this neighbourhood (Launceston). I have very recently been informed of the case of a young woman, in the village of Lifton, who is lying hopelessly ill of consumption, which her neighbours attribute to her having been "*overlooked*" (this is the local phrase by which they designate the baleful spell of the *evil eye*.) An old woman in this town is supposed to have the power of "ill wishing" or bewitching her neighbours and their cattle, and is looked on with much awe in consequence. H. G. T.—(Vol. iii. p. 133.)

DERBYSHIRE FOLK LORE.

Many years ago I learned the following verses in Derbyshire, with reference to Magpies:—

"One is a sign of sorrow; two are a sign of mirth;
Three are a sign of a wedding; and four a sign of a birth.

The opinion that a swarm of bees settling on a dead tree forbodes a death in the family prevails in Derbyshire.

In that county also there is an opinion that a dog howling before a house is an indication that some one is dying within the house; and I remember an instance where, as I heard at the time, a dog continued howling in a street in front of a house in which a lady was dying.

It is also a prevalent notion that if the sun shines through the apple-trees on Christmas Day, there will be an abundant crop the following year.

I never heard the croaking of a raven or carrion crow mentioned as an indication of anything; which is very remarkable, as well on account of its ill-omened sound, as because it was so much noticed by the Romans.

S. G. C.—(Vol. viii. p. 512.)

BAYARD'S LEAP.

On the great Roman road from Leicester to Lincoln, about four miles from Sleaford, is a spot called Bayard's Leap, where are placed three stones about thirty yards apart, and the legend told by the peasantry is that a valiant knight was riding past, when the witch who haunted the place sprang behind him upon his horse's back, named Bayard, and that the animal in pain and terror made these three terrific bounds and unhorsed the fiend. This tale has been in existence from time immemorial, and the name of the horse evidently proves a remote origin, probably Norman. An ancient preceptory of the Knight Templars is close by, named Temple Bruyere.

J. W.—(Vol. vi. p. 600.)

Newark.

A MYTH OF MIDRIDGE;

Or, a Story anent a witless Wight's Adventures with the Midridge Fairies in the Bishoprick of Durham; now more than two Centuries ago.

Talking about fairies the other day to a nearly octogenarian female neighbour, I asked, had she ever seen one in her youthful days. Her answer was in the negative; "but,"

quoth she, "I've heard my grandmother tell a story, that Midridge (near Auckland) was a great place for fairies when she was a child, and for many long years after that." A rather lofty hill, only a short distance from the village, was their chief place of resort, and around it they used to dance, not by dozens, but by hundreds, when the gloaming began to show itself of the summer nights. Occasionally a villager used to visit the scene of their gambols in order to catch if it were but a passing glance of the tiny folks, dressed in their vestments of green, as delicate as the thread of the gossamer: for well knew the lass so favoured, that ere the current year had disappeared, she would have become the happy wife of the object of her only love; and also, as well ken'd the lucky lad that he too would get a weel tochered lassie, long afore his brow became wrinkled with age, or the snow-white blossoms had begun to bud forth upon his pate. Woe to those, however, who dared to come by twos or by threes, with inquisitive and curious eye, within the bounds of their domain; for if caught, or only the eye of a fairy fell upon them, ill was sure to betide them through life. Still more awful, however, was the result if any were so rash as to address them, either in plain prose or rustic rhyme. The last instance of their being spoken to, is thus still handed down by tradition: — 'Twas on a beautifully clear evening in the month of August, when the last sheaf had crowned the last stack in their master's hagyard, and after calling the "harvest home," the daytale-men and household servants were enjoying themselves over massive pewter quarts foaming over with strong beer, that the subject of the evening's conversation at last turned upon the fairies of the neighbouring hill, and each related his oft-told tale which he had learned by rote from the lips of some parish grandame. At last the senior of the mirthful party proposed to a youthful mate of his, who had dared to doubt even the existence of such creatures, that he durst not go to the hill, mounted on his master's best palfrey, and call aloud, at the full extent of his voice, the following rhymes: —

"Rise little Lads,
Wi' your iron gads,
And set the Lad o' Midridge hame."

Tam o' Shanter-like, elated with the contents of the pewter vessels, he nothing either feared or doubted, and off went the lad to the fairy hill; so, being arrived at the base, he was nothing loth to extend his voice to its utmost powers in giving utterance to the above invitatory verses. Scarcely had the last words escaped his lips ere he was nearly surrounded by many hundreds of the little folks, who are ever ready to revenge, with the infliction of the most dreadful punishment, every attempt at insult. The most robust of the fairies, who I take to have been Oberon, their king, wielding an enormous javelin, thus, also in rhymes equally rough, rude, and rustic, addressed the witless wight: —

"Sillie Willy, mount thy filly;
And if it isn't weel corn'd and fed,
I'll ha' thee afore thou gets hame to thy Midridge bed."

Well was it for Willy that his home was not far distant, and that part light was still remaining in the sky. Horrified beyond measure, he struck his spurs into the sides of his beast, who, equally alarmed, darted off as quick as lightning towards the mansion of its owner. Luckily it was one of those houses of olden time, which would admit of an equestrian and his horse within its portals without danger; lucky, also, was it that at the moment they arrived the door was standing wide open: so, considering the house a safer sanctuary from the belligerous fairies than the stable, he galloped direct into the hall, to the no small amazement of all beholders, when the door was instantly closed upon his pursuing foes! As soon as Willy was able to draw his breath, and had in part overcome the effects of his fear, he related to his comrades a full and particular account of his adventures with the fairies; but from that time forward, never more could any one, either for love or money, prevail upon Willy to give the fairies of the hill an invitation to take an evening walk with him as far as the village of Midridge!

To conclude, when the fairies had departed, and it was considered safe to unbar the door, to give egress to Willy and his filly, it was found, to the amazement of all beholders, that the identical iron javelin of the fairy king had pierced through the thick oaken door, which for service as well as safety was strongly plated with iron, where it still stuck, and actually required the strength of the stoutest fellow in the company, with the aid of a smith's great fore-hammer to drive it forth. This singular relic of fairy-land was preserved for many generations, till passing eventually into the hands of one who cared for none of those things, it was lost, to the no small regret of all lovers of legendary lore!

M. A. D.—(Vol. ii. p. 509.)

LEGEND OF JOHN OF HORSILL.

Tradition states he held the manors of Ribbesford and Highlington, near Bewdley (Worcestershire), about the twelfth century. Several legends, approaching very near to facts, are extant in this neighbourhood concerning him; one of the best authenticated is as follows:

Hunting one day near the Severn, he started a fine buck, which took the direction of the river; fearing to lose it, he discharged an arrow, which, piercing it through, continued its flight, and struck a salmon, which had (as is customary with such fish in shallow streams) leaped from the surface of the water, with so much force as to transfix it. This being thought a very extraordinary shot (as indeed it was), a stone carving representing it was fixed over the west door of Ribbesford Church, then in course of erection. A description of this carving is, I believe, in Nash's *History of Worcestershire*, but without any mention of the legend. The carving merely shows a rude human figure with a bow, and a salmon transfixed with an arrow before it. A few facts concerning this "John of Horsill" would be hailed with much pleasure by your well wisher,

H. Corville Warde.—(Vol. v. p. 29.)

Kidderminster.

In reply to this, Mr. Cuthbert Bede writes as follows:

A correspondent refers to the Worcestershire legend of John of Horsill, which he says is as follows:

"Hunting one day near the Severn, he started a fine buck, which took the direction of the river: fearing to lose it, he discharged an arrow, which piercing it through, continued its flight, and struck a salmon, which had leaped from the surface of the water, with so much force as to transfix it. This being thought a very extraordinary shot (as indeed it was), a stone carving representing it was fixed over the west door of Ribbesford Church, then in course of erection."

Now I have always heard a not less extraordinary, but more poetical version of the legend; which is, very briefly, as follows:—The great lord of that part of the country had but one child, a daughter, who was passing fair to see, and who was beloved by a young hunter, who seems to have had nothing but his handsome face and bow to depend upon. She returned his love with all the passionate fervour of, &c. &c., and they often contrived to met in secret in one of those romantic spots on the Severn's banks, where doubtless, according to established custom, they mingled their tears, and said soft nothings, and abused the maiden's paternity. For papa was inexorable, and had no notion that his daughter, for whose hand belted knights had pleaded in vain, should be wedded to this poaching, penniless young hunter. And so they lifted up their voices and wept. But one day in came the maiden and said that she had lost the ring that her father had given her: and as it was a magical ring, that possessed a complete pharmacopœia of virtues, and healing properties, and had been a family relic for many generations, papa was so concerned about its loss that he caused a proclamation to be issued, that whoever should bring him back the ring might claim the hand of his daughter, and thus be "handsomely rewarded for his trouble." Every one searched for the ring, and every one confessed that their search was hopeless; and the handsome young hunter laughed in his sleeve, and went on his way to the great lord's castle, to beg his acceptance of a fine Severn salmon, which he had just shot. Not

that the Waltonians of that day killed their salmon in that manner, but according to the young hunter's account he had been walking on the west bank of the river, when a fine stag had suddenly started up on the eastern bank, and that he had shot an arrow at it; that when his arrow had got about half way over the river, it pierced the salmon, which had chosen that unlucky moment for his last summerset; and that thereupon the young hunter had waded into the water, and secured his unlooked-for prey. In consideration of its being killed in such a singular manner, he begged his lord's acceptance of it, and also offered his services to the cook to help to prepare it for the table. Having thus secured his witnesses, the young hunter cut the salmon open, and with a well-affected tone of wonder, exclaimed, "Here's the young lady's ring inside the salmon!" and so, sure enough, there was: and the young lady on being questioned, said that she supposed she must have lost the ring off her finger while she was bathing in the river, and that the enamoured salmon had then and there taken it to heart. But I confess I am sceptical on this point, and inclined to think that it was a well-laid plan between the young maiden and her lover. And it succeeded as it deserved; for they were married, and were very happy, and were soon surrounded by many miniature duplicates of themselves.

Whether or not the carving on the tympanum of the *northern*—not *western*—nave doorway of Ribbesford Church represents the chief event of the above legend, I am unable to say. Your correspondent says it does, and recognises in the carving "a rude human figure with a bow, and a salmon transfixed with an arrow before it:" and this is certainly the popular belief. But without wishing to disturb the legend (which Nash, in his *History of Worcestershire*, does not mention), I very much doubt its application to the carving in question. In such a rude representation it is a mere matter of speculation to say *what* it is meant for: but I take it to be a man shooting at a beaver. The object at which he is aiming is rather larger than himself, has a thin neck, a thickly-made body, a sort of square tail, and what seems

to be four small legs; and is raised on its hind feet out of what seem to be meant for rushes. Running towards the man is a small four-legged figure, much more like a dog than a stag. Certainly there is nothing about the salmon which has the least resemblance to that fish: and that the sculptor would have had the power to properly represent it we may judge from one of the capitals on the doorway, where he has carved two small fish in such a way that there is no need of the inscription "This is a fish" to tell us what is meant. We have a proof that beavers abounded in the Severn in the neighbourhood of Ribbesford in the fact that a small island there is called "Beaver's Island." A representation of the doorway is given in Nash, but it is very far from correct. Before I conclude I may mention—*apropos* to the Severn salmon—the singular fact, that not more than fifty years ago the indentures of the Bridgenorth apprentices set forth that their masters, under pain of certain penalties were *not* to give them Severn salmon for dinner *more than* three times a week!

CUTHBERT BEDE, B.A.—(Vol. vi. p. 216).

Your correspondent MR. CUTHBERT BEDE gives two versions of the legend of John of Horsill, as carved on the tympanum of Ribbesford Church; but the *poetical* version is, I believe, no true version at all, being nothing more than a fanciful adaptation, or rather the invention of a local writer (Mr. Griffiths) some five or six years ago. With regard to the nondescript thing through which the arrow passes, it may serve for a salmon, a beaver, a seal, a whale, or indeed anything else; but the most likely supposition is, that as Ribbesford in those days belonged to the monastery of Worcester, the villeins of the manor being bound to furnish nets, hunting implements, and other sporting auxiliaries, to the jolly ecclesiastics, who periodically enjoyed their battues at Ribbesford, the sculpture is merely an embodiment of this leading feature of the locality where an abundance of game was to be procured. The Normans were in the habit of perpetuating in stone these local peculiarities, and at a much later date the bosses of many of our Gothic churches are

found to represent the botanical productions of their respective neighbourhoods.—(See *The Ramble in Worcestershire.*)

J. Noake.—(Vol. vi. p. 288.)

Worcester.

LEGEND OF SIR RICHARD BAKER, SURNAMED BLOODY BAKER.

I one day was looking over the different monuments in Cranbrook Church in Kent, when in the chancel my attention was arrested by one erected to the memory of Sir Richard Baker. The gauntlet, gloves, helmet, and spurs were (as is often the case in monumental erections of Elizabethan date) suspended over the tomb. What chiefly attracted my attention was the colour of the gloves, which was red. The old woman who acted as my cicerone, seeing me look at them, said, "Aye, miss, those are Bloody Baker's gloves; their red colour comes from the blood he shed." This speech awakened my curiosity to hear more, and with very little pressing I induced my old guide to tell me the following strange tale.

The Baker family had formerly large possessions in Cranbrook, but in the reign of Edward VI. great misfortunes fell on them; by extravagance and dissipation, they gradually lost all their lands, until an old house in the village (now used as the poor-house) was all that remained to them. The sole representative of the family remaining at the accession of Queen Mary, was Sir Richard Baker. He had spent some years abroad in consequence of a duel; but when, said my informant, Bloody Queen Mary reigned, he thought he might safely return, as he was a Papist. When he came to Cranbrook he took up his abode in his old house; he only brought one foreign servant with him, and these two lived alone. Very soon strange stories began to be whispered respecting unearthly shrieks having been heard frequently to issue at nightfall from his house. Many people of importance were stopped and robbed in the Glastonbury woods, and many unfortunate travellers were missed and never heard of more. Richard Baker still

continued to live in seclusion, but he gradually repurchased his alienated property, although he was known to have spent all he possessed before he left England. But wickedness was not always to prosper. He formed an apparent attachment to a young lady in the neighbourhood, remarkable for always wearing a great many jewels. He often pressed her to come and see his old house, telling her he had many curious things he wished to show her. She had always resisted fixing a day for her visit, but happening to walk within a short distance of his house, she determined to surprise him with a visit; her companion, a lady older than herself, endeavoured to dissuade her from doing so, but she would not be turned from her purpose. They knocked at the door, but no one answered them; they, however, discovered it was not locked, and determined to enter. At the head of the stairs hung a parrot, which on their passing cried out,—

> "Peepoh, pretty lady, be not too bold,
> Or your red blood will soon run cold."

And cold did run the blood of the adventurous damsel when, on opening one of the room doors, she found it filled with the dead bodies of murdered persons, chiefly women. Just then they heard a noise, and on looking out of the window saw Bloody Baker and his servant bringing in the murdered body of a lady. Nearly dead with fear, they concealed themselves in a recess under the staircase.

As the murderers with their dead burden passed by them, the hand of the unfortunate murdered lady hung in the baluster of the stairs; with an oath Bloody Baker chopped it off, and it fell into the lap of one of the concealed ladies. As soon as the murderers had passed by, the ladies ran away, having the presence of mind to carry with them the dead hand, on one of the fingers of which was a ring. On reaching home they told their story, and in confirmation of it displayed the ring. All the families who had lost relatives mysteriously were then told of what had been found out; and they determined to ask Baker to a large party, apparently in a friendly manner, but to have

constables concealed ready to take him into custody. He came, suspecting nothing, and then the lady told him all she had seen, pretending it was a dream. "Fair lady," said he, "dreams are nothing: they are but fables." "They may be fables," said she; "but is this a fable?" and she produced the hand and ring. Upon this the constables rushed in and took him; and the tradition further says, he was burnt, notwithstanding Queen Mary tried to save him, on account of the religion he professed.

F. L.— (Vol. ii. p. 67.)

In the reign of Queen Mary, the representative of the family was Sir John Baker, who in that, and the previous reigns of Edward VI. and Henry VIII., had held some of the highest offices in the kingdom. He had been Recorder of London, Speaker of the House of Commons, Attorney-General and Chancellor of the Exchequer, and died in the first year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. His son, Sir Richard Baker, was twice high-sheriff of the county of Kent, and had the honour of entertaining Queen Elizabeth in her progress through the county. This was, most likely, the person whose monument F. L. saw in Cranbrook Church. The family had been settled there from the time of Edward III., and seem to have been adding continually to their possessions; and at the time mentioned by F. L. as that of their decline, namely, in the reign of Edward VI., they were in reality increasing in wealth and dignities. If the Sir Richard Baker whose monument is referred to by F. L. was the son of the Sir John above mentioned, the circumstances of his life disprove the legend. He was not the sole representative of the family remaining at the accession of Queen Mary. His father was then living, and at the death of his father his brother John divided with him the representation of the family, and had many descendants. The family estates were not dissipated; on the contrary, they were handed down through successive generations, to one of whom, a grandson of Sir Richard, the dignity of a baronet was given; and Sivinghurst, which was the family *seat, was in* the possession of the third and last baronet's

grandson, E. S. Beagham, in the year 1730. Add to this that the Sir Richard Baker in question was twice married, and that a monumental erection of the costly and honourable description mentioned by F. L. was allowed to be placed to his memory in the chancel of the church of the parish in which such Bluebeard atrocities are said to have been committed, and abundant grounds will thence appear for rejecting the truth of the legend in the absence of all evidence. The unfortunately red colour of the gloves most likely gave rise to the story. Nor is this a solitary instance of such a legend having such an origin. In the beautiful parish church of Aston, in Warwickshire, are many memorials of the Baronet family of Holt, who owned the adjoining domain and hall, the latter of which still remains, a magnificent specimen of Elizabethan architecture. Either in one of the compartments of a painted window of the church, or upon a monumental marble to one of the Holts, is the Ulster badge, as showing the rank of the deceased, and painted red. From the colour of the badge, a legend of the bloody hand has been created as marvellous as that of the Bloody Baker, so fully detailed by F. L.

ST. JOHNS.—(Vol. ii. p. 244.)

The story of Sir Richard Baker, circumstantial as it is, is contradicted by a Correspondent, F. B—w. (Vol. vi. p. 318.) who says:—

There does not appear to have been any memorial whatever of the Bakers in Cranbrook Church before the year 1736, when a cumbrous but costly monument was erected in the *south aisle* by John Baker Dowel, a descendant. The position of this monument was found to be so inconvenient, that some few years ago it was removed to the south chancel, where it at present stands. And now for your correspondent F. L. She says, she *saw suspended over his tomb, the gauntlet, gloves, helmet, spurs, &c.* of the deceased; and what particularly attracted her attention was, that *the gloves were red.* These *red gloves* are made the foundation of a very pretty story, which is said to be well known at Cranbrook as a tradition. Perhaps you will

scarcely believe me, when I say that the whole of this is a pure fiction. There are not, nor ever were there, any gauntlet, gloves, or other monumental insignia of any kind, suspended over Baker's monument, nor even within sight of it. The *banners, helmets, gauntlets, shields, swords, &c.*, which are the only things of the kind that F. L. could have seen, are in *another chancel*, and all belong to the ancient family of Roberts of Glassenbury in Cranbrook; as the crest on the helmets, and the blazon on the shields and tabard, undeniably prove.

Having restored to their rightful owner these *red* gloves —which, by-the-bye, are more *brown* than red—let us go to the tradition. The story is wholly unknown in Cranbrook, and I do not believe that F. L. could have heard it there. The only traditional story, which I can discover, relating to the Bakers is this: —Sir *John* Baker, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer and Privy Counsellor to Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Queen Mary, is said to have rendered himself very obnoxious in consequence of the very prominent part he took in oppressing the followers of the Reformed religion. He, it is said, had procured an order for the burning two culprits, and would have certainly carried the order into execution but that the death of the queen disappointed his intentions. It is said that the news of the queen's death reached him at a spot where three roads met, and which is now known by the name of *Baker's Cross*. Whether there be any truth in this legend, I cannot say; but most probably he obtained the name of *Bloody Baker* as being the known enemy of the Reformers, and in the same way as his royal mistress obtained the name of *Bloody Mary*.

THE RED HAND. — THE HOLT FAMILY.

This tradition is not I believe of very ancient date. It is stated that one of the Holt family murdered his cook, and was afterwards compelled to adopt the red hand in his arms. It is, however, obviously only the Ulster Badge of *Baronetcy*. ESTE.—(Vol. ii. p. 451.)

Your correspondent Este, in allusion to the arms of the Holt family, in a window of the church of Aston-juxta-Birmingham, refers to the tradition that one of the family "murdered his cook, and was afterwards compelled to adopt the red hand in his arms." Este is perfectly correct in his concise but comprehensive particulars. That which, by the illiterate, is termed "the bloody hand," and by them reputed as an abatement of honour, is nothing more than the "Ulster badge" of dignity. The tradition adds, that Sir Thomas Holt murdered the cook in a cellar, at the old family mansion, by "running him through with a spit," and afterwards buried him beneath the spot where the tragedy was enacted. I merely revert to the subject, because, within the last three months, the ancient family residence, where the murder is said to have been committed, has been levelled with the ground; and among persons who from their position in society might be supposed to be better informed, considerable anxiety has been expressed to ascertain whether any portion of the skeleton of the murdered cook has been discovered beneath the flooring of the cellar, which tradition, fomented by illiterate gossip, pointed out as the place of his interment. Your correspondents would confer a heraldic benefit if they would point out other instances — which I believe to exist — where family reputation has been damaged by similar ignorance in heraldic interpretation.

The ancient family residence to which I have referred was situated at Duddeston, a hamlet adjoining Birmingham. Here the Holts resided until May, 1631, when Sir Thomas took up his abode at Ashton Hall, a noble structure in the Elizabethan style of architecture, which according to a contemporary inscription, was commenced in April, 1618, and completed in 1635. Sir Thomas was a decided royalist, and maintained his allegiance to his sovereign, although the men of Birmingham were notorious for their disaffection, and the neighbouring garrison of Edgbaston was occupied by Parliamentarian troops. When Charles I., of glorious or unhappy memory, was on his way from Shrewsbury to the

important battle of Edgehill, on the confines of Warwickshire, he remained with Sir Thomas, as his guest, from the 15th to the 17th of October (vide Mauley's *Iter Carolinum*, Gutch's *Collectanea*, vol. ii. p. 425.); and a closet is still pointed out to the visitor where he is said to have been concealed. A neighbouring eminence is to the present day called "King's Standing," from the fact of the unhappy monarch having stood thereon whilst addressing his troops. By his acts of loyalty, Sir Thomas Holt acquired the hostility of his rebellious neighbours; and accordingly we learn that on the 18th of December, 1643, he had recourse to Colonel Leveson, who "put forty muskettiers into the house" to avert impending dangers; but eight days afterwards, on the 26th of December, "the rebels, 1,200 strong, assaulted it, and the day following tooke it, kil'd 12, and y^e^ rest made prisoners, though w^th^ losse of 60 of themselves." (Vide Dugdale's *Diary*, edited by Hamper, 4to. p. 57.) The grand staircase, deservedly so entitled, bears evident marks of the injury occasioned at this period, and an offend-cannon-ball is still preserved.

Edward, the son and heir of Sir Thomas, died at Oxford, on the 28th August, 1643, and was buried in Christ Church. He was an ardent supporter of the king. The old baronet was selected as ambassador to Spain by Charles I., but was excused on account of his infirmities. He died A. D. 1654, in the eighty-third year of his age. His excellence and benevolence of character would afford presumptive evidence of the falsehood of the tradition, if it were not totally exploded by the absurdity of the hypothesis upon which it is grounded. Sir Thomas was succeeded in the baronetcy by his grandson Robert, who in compliance with his will built an almshouse or hospital for five men and five women. It is unnecessary to pursue the family further, excepting to state that nearly at the close of the last century the entail was cut off: the family is now unknown in the neighbourhood, excepting in its collateral branches, and the hall has passed into the possession of strangers. Its last occupant was James Watt, Esq., son of the eminent mechanical phi-

losopher. He died about two years ago, and the venerable mansion remains tenantless.

With reference to the ancient family residence of the Holts, at Duddeston, it will be sufficient to observe, that in the middle of the last century the house and grounds were converted into a tavern and pleasure gardens, under the metropolitan title of Vauxhall: and for a century they continued to afford healthful recreation and scenic amusement to the busy inhabitants of Birmingham. The amazing increase in the size and population of the town has at length demanded this interesting site for building purposes. Within the last three months the house and gardens have been entirely dismantled, a range of building has already been erected, and old Vauxhall is now numbered amongst the things that were. J. Goodwin. — (Vol. ii. p. 506.)

Birmingham.

"*Bloody Hands*" *at Stoke d'Abernon, Surrey.* — The legends of Sir Richard Baker, and of a member of the Holt family, recall to my mind one somewhat similar, connected with a monument in the church of Stoke d'Abernon, Surrey, the appearance of a "bloody hand" upon which was thus accounted for to me: —

"Two young brothers of the family of Vincent, the elder of whom had just come into possession of the estate, were out shooting on Fairmile Common, about two miles from the village; they had put up several birds, but had not been able to get a single shot, when the elder swore with an oath that he would fire at whatever they next met with. They had not gone much further before the miller of a mill near at hand (and which is still standing) passed them, and made some trifling remark. As soon as he had got by, the younger brother jokingly reminded the elder of his oath, whereupon the latter immediately fired at the miller, who fell dead upon the spot. Young Vincent escaped to his home, and by the influence of his family, backed by large sums of money, no effective steps were taken to apprehend him, and he was concealed in the 'Nunnery' on his estate for some years, when death put a period to the insupportable anguish of his mind. To commemorate his rash act and his untimely death, this 'bloody hand' was placed on his monument."

So runs the story as far as I remember: the date I cannot

recollect. The legend was told me after I had left the church, and I had paid no particular attention to the monument; but I thought at the time that the hand might be only the Ulster badge. I shall be obliged to any of your readers who will throw further light upon this matter. A pilgrimage to Stoke d'Abernon, whose church contains the earliest known brass in England, would not be uninteresting. ARUN. — (Vol. ii. p. 507.)

FAIRIES.

An Irish servant of mine, a native of Galway, gave me the following relations: — Her father was a blacksmith, and for his many acts of benevolence to benighted travellers became a great favourite with the fairies, who paid him many visits. It was customary for the fairies to visit his forge at night, after the family had retired to rest, and here go to work in such right good earnest, as to complete, on all occasions, the work which had been left overnight unfinished. The family were on these occasions awoke from their slumber by the vigorous puffing of bellows, and hammering on anvil, consequent upon these industrious habits of the fairies, and it was an invariable rule for the fairies to replace all the tools they had used during the night; and, moreover, if the smithy had been left in confusion the previous evening, the "good people" always arranged it, swept the floor, and restored everything to order before the morning. I never could glean from her any detailed instances of the labour accomplished in this way, or indeed anything which might aid in the formation of an estimate of the relative skill of the fairies in manual labour; and I must confess that on these subjects I never question too closely,—the reader will know why.

On one occasion, one of the family happening to be unwell, the father went back to the smithy at midnight for some medicine which had been left there on the shelf, and put the "good people" to flight, just as they had begun *their* industrial orgies. To disturb the fairies is at any

time a perilous thing; and so it proved to him: for a fat pig died the following day, little Tike had the measles, too, after, and no end of misfortunes followed. In addition to this occult revenge, the inmates of the house were kept awake for several nights by a noise similar to that which would be produced by peas being pelted at the windows. The statement was made with an earnestness of manner which betrayed a faith without scruples.

SHIRLEY HIBBERD.—(Vol. v. p. *55.*)

LANCASHIRE FAIRY TALE.

The nursery rhymes in one of your late Numbers remind me of a story I used to be told in the nursery. It was, that two men went poaching, and having placed nets, or rather sacks, over what they supposed to be rabbit-holes, but which were in reality fairies' houses, the fairies rushed into the sacks, and the poachers, content with their prey, marched home again. A fairy missing another in the sack, called out (the story was told in broad Lancashire dialect) "Dick (dignified name for a fairy), where art thou?" To which fairy Dick replied,

"In a sack,
On a back,
Riding up Barley Brow."

The story has a good moral ending, for the poachers were so frightened that they never poached again.

T. G. C.—(Vol. vii. p. 177.)

PROPITIATING THE FAIRIES.

Having some years since, on a Sunday afternoon, had occasion to ride on horseback between two towns in the eastern part of Cornwall, I met a christening party, also on horseback, headed by the nurse with a baby in her arms. Making a halt as I approached her, she stopped me, and producing a *cake*, presented it to me, and insisted on my taking it. Several years after, when in the Isle of Man, I had the opportunity of hearing an elderly person relate

several pieces of folk lore respecting the witches and fairies in that island. It had been customary, within his recollection, for a woman, when carrying a child to be christened, to take with her *a piece of bread and cheese*, to give to the first person she met, for the purpose of *saving the child from witchcraft or the fairies*. Another custom was that of the "Queeltah," or salt put under the churn *to keep off bad people*. Stale water was thrown on the plough "to keep it from the *little folks*." A cross was tied in the tail of a cow, "to keep her from *bad bodies*." On May morning it was deemed of the greatest importance to avoid going to a neighbour's house for fire; a turf was therefore kept burning all night at home. Flowers growing in a hedge, especially green or yellow ones, were good to keep off the fairies. And finally, the last cake was left "behind the turf-flag for the *little people*." J. W. THOMAS.—(Vol. viii. p. 617.)

Dewsbury.

BURNING FERN BRINGS RAIN.

In a volume containing miscellaneous collections by Dr. Richard Pococke, in the British Museum, MS. Add. 15,801., at fol. 33. is the copy of a letter written by Philip Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, Lord Chamberlain, to the Sheriff of Staffordshire, which illustrates a curious popular belief of the period, from which even the king was not free. It is as follows:

"Sr.—His Majesty taking notice of an opinion entertained in Staffordshire, that the burning of Ferne doth draw downe rain, and being desirous that the country and himself may enjoy fair weather as long as he remains in those parts, His Majesty hath commanded me to write unto you, to cause all burning of Ferne to bee forborne, untill his Majesty be passed the country. Wherein not doubting but the consideration of their own interest, as well as of his Ma^ties, will invite the country to a ready observance of this his Ma^ties command, I rest,

"Your very loving friend,

"PEMBROKE AND MONTGOMERY.

"Belvoir, 1st August, 1636.

"*To my very loving* friend the High Sheriff of the County of Stafford."

Do any other writers of the time notice this "opinion," and do any traces of it exist at present?

μ.—(Vol. v. p. 242.)

In Colonel Reid's *Law of Storms*, p. 483. *et seq.*, 2nd edition, accounts are given of the violent whirlwinds produced by fires. It may be supposed that in former times they were on a larger scale than at present, and, from the great force described, they might have affected the weather at least, when on the turn already.

C. B.—(Vol. v. p. 280.)

Your correspondent μ asks whether any traces of such a popular belief exists at present.

In the Highlands of Scotland, where at this season (Spring) the heather is burned by the shepherds, the belief is general among the people; I may add that it is a belief founded on observation. In Australia a hot wind blowing from the north caused (in part at least) by bush fires in the interior, is invariably succeeded by rain from the opposite part.

It would not be difficult, perhaps, to assign a satisfactory reason for a meteorological fact, which by a misnomer is dubbed "Folk Lore." W. C.

It is believed in the neighbourhood of Melrose that burning the heather brings rain.

It must be remarked that Tweeddale runs mainly west and east; that the heather-covered hills are all to the *west* of this place. West wind brings rain. †

In the north of England, and in Scotland, and probably in all moorland districts of the country, it is the practice of shepherds in spring, when the heather is dry enough, to set fire to it and burn large tracts of it, in order to get rid of the old woody plants. The young heather which springs up from the roots produces much better and more palatable food for the sheep. In this process, which takes place at the same time in a whole district (viz. when there has been no rain for some time), the whole air becomes loaded w

smoke, and a very misty state of the atmosphere is produced. It is the general belief throughout the south of Scotland, and in the Cheviot range, that this burning "doth draw downe rain."

Luckily this season (1852), though there has been much moor burning, the general expectation has been agreeably disappointed, and the weather has now continued perfectly dry for several weeks, and appears likely to do so for some time to come, to the great delight of the farmers, as most propitious for sowing their grain of all kinds.

J. Ss.—(Vol. v. p. 301.)

Lammermuir.

In some parts of America, but more particularly in the New England States, there was a popular belief, in former times, that immediately after a large fire in a town, or of wood in a forest, there would be a "fall of rain." Whether this opinion exists among the people at present, or whether it was entertained by John Winthrop, the first governor of the colony of Massachusetts Bay, and the Pilgrim Fathers, on their landing at Plymouth, as they most unfortunately did, their superstitious belief in witchcraft, and some other "strange notions," may be a subject of future inquiry.

W. W.—(Vol. v. p. 500.)

La Valetta, Malta.

THE WANDERING JEW IN ENGLAND.

Of the many myths which diverge from every little incident of Our Saviour's career, the legend of Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, is certainly the most striking and widely distributed. According to the old ballad, in Percy's *Collection:*

> "He hath past through many a foreign place:
> Arabia, Egypt, Africa,
> Greece, Syria, and great Thrace,
> And throughout all Hungaria."

All the nations of the Seven Champions have it in some shape or other, and it is amusing to note the way in which

the story adapts itself to the exigencies of time and place. In Germany, where he appeared A.D. 1547, he was a kind of Polyglot errant, battling professors and divines with the accumulated learning of fifteen centuries. In Paris, he heralded the advent of Cagliostro and Mesmer, cured diseases, and astounded the *salons* by his prodigious stories, in which he may be truly said to have ventured the entire animal. He remembered seeing Nero standing on a hill to enjoy the flames of his capital; and was a particular crony of Mahomet's father at Ormus. It was here, too, he anticipated the coming scepticism, by declaring, from personal experience, that all history was a tissue of lies. In Italy the myth has become interwoven with the national art lore. When he came to Venice, he brought with him a fine cabinet of choice pictures, including his own portrait by Titian, taken some two centuries before. In England John Bull has endowed him with the commercial spirit of his stationary brethren, and, to complete his certificate of naturalization, made him always thirsty! But the Jew of Quarter Sessions' Reports, who is always getting into scrapes, is not the Jew of the rural popular legends; in which he is invariably represented as a purely benevolent being, whose crime has been long since expiated by his cruel punishment, and therefore entitled to the help of every good Christian. When on the weary way to Golgotha, Christ fainting, and overcome under the burden of the cross, asked him, as he was standing at his door, for a cup of water to cool His parched throat, he spurned the supplication, and bade Him on the faster. "I go," said the Saviour, "but thou shalt thirst and tarry till I come." And ever since then, by day and night, through the long centuries he has been doomed to wander about the earth, ever craving for water, and ever expecting the day of judgment which shall end his toils:

"Mais toujours le soleil se lève,
Toujours, toujours
Tourne la terre où moi je cours,
Toujours, toujours, toujours, toujours!"

Sometimes, during the cold winter nights, the lonely cottager will be awoke by a plaintive demand for "Water, good Christian! water for the love of God!" And if he looks out into the moonlight, he will see a venerable old man in antique raiment, with grey flowing beard, and a tall staff, who beseeches his charity with the most earnest gesture. Woe to the churl who refuses him water or shelter. My old nurse, who was a Warwickshire woman, and, as Sir Walter said of his grandmother, "a most *awfu' le'er*," knew a man who boldly cried out, "All very fine, Mr. Ferguson, but you can't lodge here." And it was decidedly the worst thing he ever did in his life, for his best mare fell dead lame, and corn went down, I am afraid to say how much per quarter. If, on the contrary, you treat him well, and refrain from indelicate inquiries respecting his age—on which point he is very touchy—his visit is sure to bring good luck. Perhaps years afterwards, when you are on your death-bed, he may happen to be passing; and if he *should*, you are safe; for three knocks with his staff will make you hale, and he never forgets any kindnesses. Many stories are current of his wonderful cures; but there is one to be found in Peck's *History of Stamford* which possesses the rare merit of being written by the patient himself. Upon Whitsunday, in the year of our Lord 1658, "about six of the clock, just after evensong," one Samuel Wallis, of Stamford, who had been long wasted with a lingering consumption, was sitting by the fire, reading in that delectable book called *Abraham's Suit for Sodom*. He heard a knock at the door; and, as his nurse was absent, he crawled to open it himself. What he saw there, Samuel shall say in his own style:—"I beheld a proper, tall, grave old man. Thus he said: 'Friend, I pray thee, give an old pilgrim a cup of small beere!' And I said, 'Sir, I pray you, come in and welcome.' And he said, 'I am no Sir, therefore call me not Sir; but come in I must, for I cannot pass by thy doore.'"

After finishing the beer: "Friend," he said, "thou art not well." "I said, 'No, truly Sir, I have not been well

this many yeares.' He said, 'What is thy disease?' I said, 'A deep consumption, Sir; our doctors say, past cure: for, truly, I am a very poor man, and not able to follow doctors' councell.' 'Then,' said he, 'I will tell thee what thou shalt do; and, by the help and power of Almighty God above, thou shalt be well. To-morrow, when thou risest up, go into thy garden, and get there two leaves of red sage, and one of bloodworte, and put them into a cup of thy small beere. Drink as often as need require, and when the cup is empty fill it again, and put in fresh leaves every fourth day, and thou shalt see, through our Lord's great goodness and mercy, before twelve dayes shall be past, thy disease shall be cured and thy body altered.'"

After this simple prescription, Wallis pressed him to eat: "But he said, 'No, friend, I will not eat; the Lord Jesus is sufficient for me. Very seldom doe I drinke any beere neither, but that which comes from the rocke. So, friend, the Lord God be with thee.'"

So saying, he departed, and was never more heard of; but the patient got well within the given time, and for many a long day there was war hot and fierce among the divines of Stamford, as to whether the stranger was an angel or a devil. His dress has been minutely described by honest Sam. His coat was purple, and buttoned down to the waist; "his britches of the same couler, all new to see to;" his stockings were very white, but whether linen or jersey, deponent knoweth not; his beard and head were white, and he had a white stick in his hand. The day was rainy from morning to night, "but he had not one spot of dirt upon his cloathes."

Aubrey gives an almost exactly similar relation, the scene of which he places in the Staffordshire Moorlands. He there appears in a "purple shag gown," and prescribes balm-leaves.

So much for the English version of the Wandering Jew. Nothing tending to illustrate a theme to which the world has been indebted for *Salathiel*, *St. Leon*, *Le Juif Errant*,

and *The Undying One*, can be said to be wholly uninteresting. V. T. STERNBERG.—(Vol. xii. p. 503.)

FOLK LORE IN MONMOUTHSHIRE.

In one of the earlier numbers of "N. & Q." I recollect, an inquiry respecting a publication containing an account of the parish of Aberystruth in the above county. A mutilated copy of it has fallen in my way; and for the satisfaction of the inquirer, and of such readers as take an interest in folk lore, I venture to offer a notice of this singular performance, and an extract of some of that part of it which relates to the apparitions and fairies of that country. Whatever may be now the case, they had held there ancient domain in hill and dale, by grove and fountain, from the earliest times to those of the writer, among the natives of Monmouthshire; which, though severed from Wales by act of parliament, remained united to it in popular feeling, and continues such in many respects to this day. The same may be said of the whole of the principality. Omens, witches, apparitions, and fairies have, however, at no period, found a more zealous advocate than the author of this treatise; and the serious and conscientious manner in which, after the school of Baxter and Cotton Mather, he supports his reasoning in their behalf by proofs from Scripture, shows how deeply the belief of all traditions and relations of this kind had taken root in his confiding mind; and how honestly he endeavoured to employ what he himself believed, in the refutation of infidelity, and confirmation of religion among his own countrymen: for he appears to have been as generous a lover of his country as ever breathed her mountain air.

The title of the work, an octavo pamphlet of 160 pages, is this:

"A Geographical, Historical, and Religious Account of the Parish of Aberystruth, in the County of Monmouth. To which are added, Memoirs of several persons of Note, who lived in the said Parish. By Edmund Jones. Trevecka: printed in the Year 1779.

Edmund Jones, according to his own statement, was born at Pen-yr-Llwyn, in the Valley of the Church, in the parish of Aberystruth; and from hints that he has given of himself appears, at the time of his authorship, to have been about seventy-one years of age. He was an Independent preacher, in religious views a Millenarian, inclined to Calvinism, and no friend to Wesley or the Romanists. His style is strikingly national, characterised by extreme simplicity of thought and expression; presenting a graphic portrait of a mind piously disposed, but imbued with a credulity unbounded; and arguing with as much earnestness in favour of supernatural agencies and appearances, as blindness in being able to discern, what may be obvious enough to most of his readers, that his relations frequently make much less for him than against him.

In the Preface (p. vi.) he gives this explanation of the origin of his attempt at parochial history, and a defence of the marvellous portion of it:

"I remember, long time, seeing a letter in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in April 1755, from a gentleman who desired such accounts from parishes as I have given of the parish of Aberystruth. If this gentleman is now alive, he would be glad to read this account, especially as I can tell him that his letter did in some measure influence me to write it.

"But I am aware of it, if this book comes into the hands of gross unbelievers, the account of apparitions contained in it will be matter of ridicule to them; who, from a certain kind of pride, affectedly run down accounts of apparitions. But is it not an unreasonable kind of unbelief, which belies the testimony and experience of millions of men in the world—and, it may be in Wales, from the first to the last? Most of them under no temptation to deceive with false stories of this nature. Besides, those spirits more properly belong to eternity; yet they are also, in some measure, the subjects of God's providence, which governs the world. Providence hath a two-fold concern with them. On one hand tolerating their appearance and agency in some measure, and on the other hand in restraining and limiting their appearances and evil agencies. These spirits also have a concern with mankind more than being fellow-creatures in the creation; with the wicked, who surely are in alliance with hell, and under Satan's government—who is the God of this world (Eph.

ii. 2.). With the people of God they are concern'd as enemies, and in respect of them he is more properly called the Enemy."

His division of the work into chapters is as follows:

"1. Of the Name of the Parish.
2. Of its Boundaries and Limits.
3. Of its Measure and Extent.
4. Of the Parts, Form, and Surface of its Grounds, and Mountains and Valleys.
5. Of the Rivers, Rivulets, and Waters.
6. The Natural Curiosities and Remarkable Things in the Mountains, Valleys, and Waters.
7. Of the Air.
8. Of the Soil and Product of the Earth, Internal and External.
9. Inferences and several Moral Instructions deduced therefrom.
10. Of the Building, Ordinary and Extraordinary.
11. Of the Pleasant Places in the Parish.
12. Of the Population and Inhabitants.
13. Of Five Remarkable and Extraordinary Things that came to pass in the Parish.
14. Of Apparitions and Agencies of the Fairies, &c.
15. Of Religion in Times Past and Present.

Lastly, Memoirs of Religious Persons of some Note of both Sexes."

These memoirs are very brief, and somewhat after the manner of Melchior Adamus, the biographer of the reformed divines of Germany; but they contain touches of very effective *naïveté*. The chapter which concerns folk lore is, however, perhaps the most curious of the whole production, and sorry I am that it cannot be given entire.

Chap. XIV. p. 68. "Of Apparitions, and Agencies of Spirits in the Parish of Aberystruth."

"The sons of infidelity seem much averse unto, and affect to speak with levity and ridicule of, apparitions, as if they were the posterity and scholars of the ancient Sadducees, against whom the Scripture speaks. But in the name of truth, why is it that these men can give no sober attention to great numbers of honest men, who have their wits about them as well as they; are as far from lying and falsehood as themselves can be, who attest these things; and have no selfish ends to serve by such relations? Why should these men think that because themselves have not seen and experienced such *things, that* none else have? Would it not be sufficient for them to

say, we indeed have no experience of such things, but it may be others have; and since many persons of probity and sense do attest it, it is likely there is something in it, more likely than that there is not; and therefore it will not become us to scoff at such relations. Men of no experience in this case are in no proper condition to confute them, and it becomes them not to attempt to confute matters of fact, of which there are abundant certainties to a sober wit. But nothing will satisfy unreasonable, proud Infidelity.

"In former times, more than at present, there were frequent appearances of the fairies in Wales; I think as much in the parish of Aberystruth as in any other, and more than in some. They are no doubt evil spirits belonging to the kingdom of darkness. They were seen in former times, and heard by some persons or other continually, and sometimes by several persons together at all hours of the night, and all hours of the day. In the night more than in the day, in the morning and evening of the day more than about noon. Abundance of people saw them, and heard their music, which every one said was low and pleasant, but none could ever learn the tune; heard their talking like that of many talking together, but the words seldom heard. But to those who did hear, they seemed to dispute much about future events, and about what they were to do; whence it came to a proverb in the parish concerning disagreeing persons, '*Ni Chydsanant kwy mwy na Bendith eu Mammau*,' *i. e.* 'They will no more agree than the fairies.'

"They appeared diverse ways, but their most frequent way of appearing was like dancing-companies with musick, and in the form of funerals. When they appeared like dancing-companies, they were desirous to entice persons into their company, and some were drawn among them and remained among them some time, usually a whole year; as did Edmund William Rees, a man whom I well knew, and was a neighbour, who came back at the year's end, and looked very bad. But either they were not able to give much account of themselves, or they durst not give it, only said they had been dancing, and that the time was short. But there were some others who went with them at night, and returned sometimes at night, and sometimes the next morning; especially those persons who took upon them to cure the hurts received from the fairies, as Charles Hugh of Coed yr Pame, in Langybi parish, and Rissiart Cap Dee, of Aberystruth; for the former of these must certainly converse with them, for how else could he declare the words which his visitors had spoken a day or days before they came to him, to their great surprise and wonder?

"And as for Rissiart Cap Dee, so called because he wore a black cap, it is said of him that when he lodged in some houses to cure

those who were hurt by the fairies, he would suddenly rise up in the night, and make a very hasty preparation to go down stairs; which when one person observ'd, he said, 'Go softly, Uncle Richard, least you fall:' he made answer, 'O, here are some to receive me.' But when he was called to one person, who had inadvertently fallen among the fairies, and had been greatly hurt by them, and kept his bed upon it, whose relations had sent for the said Rissiart Cap Dee to cure him; who, when he came up to the sick man's chamber, the sick man took up a pound-weight stone, which was by the bed-side, and threw it at the infernal charmer with all his might, saying, 'Thou, old villain, wast one of the worst of them to hurt me!' for he had seen him among them acting his part against him; upon which the old charmer went away muttering some words of malevolence against him. He lived at the foot of Rhyw Coelbren, and there was a large hole in the side of the thatch of his house, thro' which the people believed he went out at night to the fairies, and came in from them at night; but he pretended it was that he might see the stars at night. The house is down long ago. He lived by himself, as did the before-mentioned Charles Hugh, who was very famous in the county for his cures, and knowledge of things at a distance; which he could not possibly know without conversing with evil spirits, who walked the earth to and fro. He is yet said to be an affable, friendly man, and cheerful; 'tis then a pity he should be in alliance with hell, and an agent in the kingdom of darkness.

"I will only give one instance of his knowledge of things at a distance, and of secret things. Henry John Thomas, of the parish of Aberystruth, a relation of mine, an honest man, went with the water of a young woman whom he courted, and was sick, to the said Charles Hugh, who, as soon as he saw Henry John, pleasantly told him, 'Ho! you come with your sweetheart's water to me.' And he told him the very words which they had spoken together in a secret place, and described the place where they spoke. It was the general opinion in times past, when these things were very frequent, that the fairies knew whatever was spoken in the air without the houses, not so much what was spoken in the houses. I suppose they chiefly knew what was spoken in the air at night. It was also said that they rather appeared to an uneven number of persons, to one, three, five, &c.; and oftener to men than to women. Thomas William Edmund, of Havodavel, an honest, pious man, who often saw them, declared that they appeared with one bigger than the rest, going before them in the company.

"But they very often appeared in the form of a funeral before the death of many persons, with a bier and a black cloth, in the midst of a company about it, on every side, before and after it. The in-

stances of this were so numerous, that it is plain, and past all dispute, that they infallibly foreknew the time of men's death: the difficulty is, whence they had this knowledge. It cannot be supposed that either God Himself, or His angels, discovered this to these spirits of darkness. For *the secrets of the Lord are with those that fear Him*, not with His enemies. Psalm xxv. 14. They must therefore have this knowledge from the position of the stars at the time of birth, and their influence, which they perfectly understand beyond what mortal men can do. We have a constant proof of this in the corps candles, whose appearance is an infallible sign that death will follow, and they never fail going the way that the corps will go to be buried, be the way ever so unlikely that it should go through. But to give some instances in Aberystruth Parish."

The rude hand of some one, who evidently entertained no respect for the subject, has just at this interesting part torn out a whole sheet of the copy, so that from pages 73. to 80. there is an entire blank. We then come to a story of the fairies carrying men in the night in a state of insensibility to other places.

"Mr. Edmund Miles, of Ty yn yr llwyn in Ebwy-vawr, and some young men of the neighbourhood, going with him a hunting to Langattock Crickowel in Breconshire, Mr. Miles having, besides two or three estates in Ebwy-vawr Valley, an estate in those parts. Among others, a brother of mine went with him, Mr. Miles being my father's landlord. After hunting a great part of the day, and they had sat down to rest, when they were concluding to return home, up started a hare just by them. After which the hounds ran, and they after the hounds. After the hare had given them a long chace, the hounds followed it to the cellar-window of Richard the Tailor, who kept the publick-house in the village of Langattock, and challenged the hare at the cellar-window: that village at that time being very infamous for witches in all the country round, and this man among the rest was believed to be one, and one who resorted to the company of the fairies. This begat a suspicion in the company that he was the hare which had played them that trick; to make it too late for them to return home, that they might stay to spend money at his house that night. It being now too late to return home, and being weary, they did stay there. But they were very free in their suspicions and reflections upon him. Mr. Miles, who was a sober, wise gentleman, although of few words, was not without his suspicion with the rest, though he persuaded them to speak less. And when my brother, some time in the night, wanted

to go out to make water, Mr. Miles, and others with him, dissuaded him from going out, but to do it in the house; which he disdaining to do, ventured to go out, but did not return; which after waiting awhile, the company became uneasy and very stormy, and abusive in language to the man of the house, threatening to burn the house if my brother did not return; and so troublesome they were, that the man and his wife left the room and went to bed. The company were still waiting and expecting his return, and slept little. Next morning, not very early, he came to them. They were exceeding glad to see him, though he appeared like one who had been drawn through thorns and briars, with his hair disordered and looking bad, who was naturally a stout man, and of a good healthy complexion. They were very curious to know where he had been, and what had happened to him. He told them he had been travelling all night in unknown, rough ways, and did not know where he was, until early that day he saw himself at Twyn Gwnlliw, near the entrance into Newport Town, where he helped a man, from Risga, to raise a load of coal which had fallen from his horse. Suddenly after he became insensible, and was brought back into the place from whence he had been taken. In a few hours, therefore, he must have been carried by these infernal spirits, through the air, more than twenty miles, for so long the way is from Newport to Langattock village. Let none say that this is impossible or unlikely, since the devil is said in Scripture, Matth. iv. 5, 6., to carry the Son of God through the air to the pinnacle of the temple, when he tempted Him to destroy Himself; our Saviour suffering it that He might be an experimental sympathiser, and deliverer of those who are tempted, as many are, with this kind of destructive temptation.

"The above relation, not very long ago, I had from the mouth of the Rev. Mr. Thomas Lewis, who then was one of the company. This notable turn came to pass about the year 1733. And so it was long kept from my knowledge, and the knowledge of my father and mother. It seems he had desired the company to keep it secret, so that it was not told me till many years after his death. After this he became sober and penitent, especially after the death of my father and mother, who before was a stranger to the life of godliness, and lived badly; only he had some natural virtues, and had a respect for people whom he thought to be truly religious and sincere.

"But some may ask, to what purpose are things of this nature related, and what good end can it serve, I answer,—

"That having taken upon me to give a full account of this parish, I could not properly avoid giving some account of these extraordinary things, which really came to pass in it, and of which those persons who knew of them would expect to hear, and would blame the

omission of them. I also reasonably apprehend that a well-attested relation of apparitions and agencies of spirits in the world, is a great means, perhaps the most effectual of any external means, to prevent the capital infidelities of *atheism* and *Sadducism*, which get much ground in some countries; for in Wales, where such things have often happened, and sometimes still do in some places, though but seldom, now we scarce meet with any who question the being and apparition of spirits. Wales indeed is in general happily free from this capital infidelity, of bad tendency towards *atheism*; though it is to be wished that those who are free from this infidelity, stood more in awe of the world to come, not far off; and made a greater preparation for eternity. Many indeed of the gentry, and some others in imitation of them, here in Wales, as well as in England, affect to disbelieve, dispute against, and ridicule the account of apparitions and agencies of evil spirits in the world, as if Satan walked to and fro in the world, and did nothing, though the Scripture shows otherwise (Job, chaps. i. and ii.; 1 Kings, xxii.; 1 Peter, v. 8, 9.). I have seen some who would hardly believe such things, which yet they heard from many, till by sensible experience they were obliged to believe. Among others, I met with one, and he a man of probity and great sense, who, indeed, questioned not the being of spirits, good and bad, in the world, but would hardly believe that they appeared, or at least that it was but seldom. But some time after he was by very sensible experience convinced, and owned his mistake. Is it reasonable that such as have had no experience of these things, and speak against them, should be believed against the many that have; and they also men of sense and probity? No, it is unreasonable, unjust, injurious, and foolish. The Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, do speak of apparitions of spirits, both good and bad, from heaven and from hell, and do declare that the devil is the father of the wicked, John viii. 44.: *Ye are of your father the devil, and his lusts ye will do.* That he is the god of this world, 2 Cor. iv. 4. That he is the adversary and tempter of the saints, and walketh about to do mischief. But can he be a father that never appears to his children?—a king that never appears to any of his subjects?—an adversary that always walketh about to do mischief, and doth mischief, and yet is always invisible? How unjust, unreasonable, foolish, and impious, therefore, is that kind of unbelief which will not believe the God of truth, and the testimonies of men without number in all ages of the world!

"But the apparitions of the fairies, and of other spirits of hell (for our Saviour, who perfectly knows hell, intimates that there are different sorts of them, Mark ix. 29.: *And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting*) have very

much ceased in Wales since the light of the Gospel; and religion hath so much prevailed: according as was foretold by the admirable Mr. Morgan Lloyd, of Wrexham, who, in one of his books, which he wrote about the middle of the last century, hath this expression concerning the fairies: 'The day dawneth, and the worms of darkness will hide;' and of the accomplishment of this prophecy, Mr. Charles Edwards speaks in his *History of the Faith in Welsh*, which he printed in the year 1676. In the fourth edition of which very excellent book, not sufficiently attended to and esteemed, pp. 269. and 270., he hath these words: 'For as formerly the Gospel silenc'd the voices, and hindered the actings of devils, so now, since the late reformation and repairing of the faith, those familiar devils, the fairies, are not so bold as in the time of popery, when they appeared in visible companies, to deceive people into familiarity with them—a sign that it is become a Gospel-day when the worms of darkness do hide.'

"But some persons may desire to know, why these fairies have appeared in Wales more than in some other countries; to which I answer, that I can give no other reason but this,—that having lost the light of the true religion in the eighth and ninth centuries of Christianity, and received popery in its stead, it became dark night upon them; and then these spirits of darkness became more bold and intruding, and the people, as I said before, in their great ignorance, seeing them, like a company of children, in dry, clean places, dancing, and having musick among them, thought them to be some happy beings, as appears from the names given them, namely, *Mother's blessing*, and *Fair folks of the wood*, made them welcome in their houses, and, as saith the prophet Isaiah, xxviii. 18., made a covenant with hell; which was disannulled by the light and grace of the Gospel. Mr. Edwards saith, that the Welsh entered into familiarity with the fairies in the time of Henry IV., p. 223. of the before-mentioned book; and very likely the evil then increased; the severe laws of that prince enjoining, among other things, that they were not to bring up their children to learning, &c., by which a total darkness came upon them, without any light; which cruel laws were occasioned by the rebellion of *Owen Glandwr*, and the Welsh which joined with him, foolishly thinking to shake off the *Saxon* yoke before they had repented of their sins: in which they had continued from the time of the faithful Gildas, who had told them of their sins and in vain warned them to repent. But this evil had begun before, when the darkness of popery first commenced. We ought therefore to bless the Lord for the Gospel day of light and liberty, which, together with other greater blessings, hath greatly lessened, though not quite annihilated, these hellish appearances.

"The inhabitants of the earth have, for the most part, but a slight knowledge of eternity, and the faith and consideration of it answerably weak, and of little effect in the far greatest part of men. And therefore any thing tending to help the faith of this great and important subject, the reality of eternity, ought to be esteemed and made use of. And it is not easy to say what is more proper and effectual for this end, than the real sensible apparitions of spirits, good and bad, who are the subjects of eternity, and prove its reality. Every truth may be of use, whether it comes from heaven or from hell. And this kind of truth hath been of great use in this country, to prevent a doubt of eternity and of the world to come; why, then, should not the account of apparitions and the agencies of spirits have some place in Christian conversation and writings?

"Besides, seeing the apparitions, and the malevolent agencies of evil spirits in Wales, are very much ceased since the preaching of the Gospel, and the spreading of the knowledge of God, who then cannot see that this makes for the honour of God and His word, the comfort of the inhabitants, and a further encouragement and engagement to them to mind the word of the Lord, and to live according to it? This good we have from this evil, and it is not a little. And the good also of having this evil lessened, further appears from the perfect aversion of these fairies to the name of God, and every spiritual good, and is easily collected from the manner of their appearances and actings in former times.

"These are the good effects arising from it, and I will ask no man's pardon for this account of apparitions in the parish of Aberystruth, tho' it is the only thing in this writing which, in respect of some people, needs an apology; for why should the sons of infidelity be gratified, whose notions tend to weaken the important belief of eternity, to dissipate religion, and to banish it out of the world?"

JOHN WEBB.—(Vol. xii. pp. 483. 504.)

FOLK LORE IN HULL.

Washing in the same Water.—If two persons wash in the same tub together, they will be sure to "fall out" before they go to bed.

An itching Palm.—That if the palm of your hand itches, you will be sure to get some money either given or paid you, soon. Brutus said his friend had an itching palm, that is, he loved money.

Odd Numbers.—They are lucky, except the number 13, which is the most unlucky of numbers.

Tide Time.—A common belief is, that most deaths take place at tide time, or turn of the tide.

That children who cannot retain their water may be cured by eating three roasted mice. The same dish is also a cure for the whooping-cough. I have known them given several times for both complaints, and by respectable people.

Ear-burning.—If your right ear burns, some person is speaking well of you; but if your left ear burns, they are slandering you.

To discover the body of a drowned person.—I have twice seen the following means used to recover the body of a drowned person. A penny roll, with a quantity of quick-silver in a hole in the centre, was allowed to float on the water, in the firm belief that it would stand still over the place where the body lay. In neither case did it succeed.

Cuckoo Penny.—If when you hear this bird you turn a penny over in your pocket, you will never be without one until you hear him again.

Crickets.—It is unlucky to kill a cricket.

Beetles.—If you kill a beetle it is sure to rain.

Spider.—There is a small black spider that often gets on our clothes or hats; this is called a "money spider," and if you kill it you will be sure to suffer for it by a lack of the needful.

Marriage.—Be sure when you go to get married that you don't go in at one door and out at another, or you will always be unlucky.

The Bridal Bed and the Death Bed.—Whichever goes to sleep first on the marriage night, will be sure to die first; this is as true as scripture, at least they say so.

Marrying and Burying.—Happy is the bride the sun shines on, and blessed is the corpse the rain falls on.

Cures for Warts.—Steal a piece of meat, rub your warts with it, then hide the meat, and as it decays so will your warts; or, rub them with a "bean swad," then throw the pod away, and as it decays so will your wart.

It's unlucky to meet a funeral; to rob either a robin's or a swallow's nest; to cross your knife and fork, or to upset the saltcellar (if you do the latter you must throw a pinch over your left shoulder, and it renders the unlucky deed of non-effect); to be first wished a merry Christmas or a happy new year by a fair man.

Valentine Morn.—You'll marry the man or the woman, as the case may be, that you meet the first on Valentine morn.

To give away a knife, a razor, or a pair of scissors to a friend, is to cut their acquaintance, for you are sure to fall out after; therefore you must take money for them, be it ever so little.

To dream of your Sweetheart.—Take the bladebone of a rabbit and stick nine pins in it, and then put it under your pillow, and you will be sure to see the object of your affections.

To cut a child's nails before it is twelve months old is unlucky.

If you wish well to your neighbour's child, when it first comes to your house you must give it a cake, a little salt, and an egg. NICTILLIS NICTOLLIS.—(Vol. vi. p. 311.)

Hull.

NORFOLK LEGEND IN STONE.

In the chancel of Wickhampton Church, Norfolk, are the canopied tombs of Sir W. Gerbrygge, or Gerbridge, and his wife. The inscription now is gone, and though still beautiful, the tombs are sadly mutilated; some of the stones, it is said, have been taken to decorate a neighbouring church! The recumbent effigies of the knight and his lady have the hands placed in the attitude of prayer; and in them, till very recently, were small heart-shaped, or, if I recollect aright, oval pieces of stone. When a child, having had an infantine quarrel with my brother, we were taken by our nurse to see these figures; and were informed that they were two brothers named Hampton, who had quarrel-

led, and fought, and *torn each other's hearts out.* After this Kilkenny-cat proceeding, Divine vengeance turned their bodies to stone; and, with the hearts in their hands, they were placed in the church as a monument of their wickedness. The parish, too, which had been the scene of the unnatural conflict, had its name changed; and, from that time, bore the name of Wicked-Hampton, since contracted into Wickhampton. The shields of arms over the tombs were those with which the brothers fought; and the actual locality of the combat is marked by a piece of flint masonry, let into the side of a ditch. This, I have since ascertained, is the boundary of Halvergate and Wickhampton. I need hardly say, that the legend, combined with the due recital of—

> "Let dogs delight
> To bark and bite," &c.,

produced a very salutary effect upon us, and fully convinced us that—

> "Our little hands were never made
> To tear each other's eyes"

or hearts out. But I always gave the nurse the credit of having invented the story, until, a few years ago, I happened to be in the church, inspecting it, when a nurse-maid took the opportunity of the doors being open to enter with her charge, and recounted the tale, to the no small horror of a little girl and boy who accompanied her, and, by the evidence of their countenances, gave implicit credence to it. Upon inquiry, I found that all the elderly people of the parish were acquainted with the legend, and added, that the subject of dispute was the boundary of the parishes, which respectively belonged to the brothers. And as the one was punished for not interfering, by having the name of Wicked-Hampton given it, so the other, which had been by far the worst in the dispute, had the name of Hell-fire-gate, since corrupted (shall I say?), or changed, into Halvergate, attached to it. The inhabitants of the former parish, naturally wishing to get rid, as far as possible, of their disgraceful name, call it Wickenton or Wickington.

To any ecclesiologist visiting Lowestoft or Yarmouth, I would recommend a visit to this church, which is barely two miles from the Reedham Station. There are some curious frescoes on the walls. One, I imagine, of St. Catherine; and another representing a figure of a man with two greyhounds and a hare. In particular, I would feel obliged to any such visitor who would, through the medium of "N. & Q.," explain to me the use of the quatrefoiled and cruciform holes in the screen. They are cut with too much regularity to have been the work of mischief.

A recent writer in *The Athenæum* controverts the derivation of Bromwych-ham for Birmingham; because, he says, there is no instance of the Saxon termination, *-wic*, having the termination *-ham* annexed to it. Not to mention various Wickhams and Witchams, formerly spelt Wycham, in England, here we seem to have three usual terminations united in one name, Wic-ham-tune."

E. G. R.—(Vol. ii. p. 486.)

DEVONSHIRE CHARMS.

The following charms were obtained from an old woman in this parish (Launceston): probably they are all known to you already:

(*a.*) *For a Scald or Burn.*

"There were three angels came from the East and West,
One brought fire and another brought frost,
And the third it was the Holy Ghost.
Out fire, in frost, in the name of the Father,
The Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen."

(*b.*) *For a Sprain.*

"As our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was riding into Jerusalem, His horse tripped and sprained his leg. Our Blessed Lord and Saviour blessed it, and said,

"Bone to bone and vein to vein,
O vein turn to thy rest again!
M. N. so shall thine in the Name," &c.

(*c.*) *For stopping Blood.*

"Our Blessed Saviour was born in Bethlehem and baptized in the river Jordan.

'The waters were wild and rude.
The child Jesus was meek, mild, and good.'

He put His foot into the waters, and the waters stopped, and so shall thy blood, in the Name," &c.

(*d.*) *For the Tooth-ache.*

"All glory! all glory! all glory! be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

"As our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was walking in the garden of Gethsemane, He saw Peter weeping. He called him unto Him, and said, Peter, why weepest thou? Peter answered and said, Lord, I am grievously tormented with pain, the pain of my tooth. Our Lord answered and said, If thou wilt believe in Me, and My words abide with thee, thou shalt never feel any more pain in thy tooth. Peter said, Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief. In the Name, &c.

"God grant M. N. ease from the pain in his teeth."

(*e.*) *For Fits.*—Go into a church at midnight and walk three times round the communion table. This was done in this parish a few years since.

(*f.*) An inhabitant of this parish told me that his father went into Lydford Church, at twelve o'clock at night, and cut off some lead from every diamond pane in the windows; with which he made a heart, to be worn by his wife afflicted with "*breastills*," i. e. *sore breasts.*

(*g.*) The skin cast by a snake is very useful in extracting thorns, &c., from the body, but, unlike other remedies, it is repellent, not attractive; hence it must always be applied on the opposite side to that on which the thorn entered. In some cases where the skin has been applied on the same side, it has forced the thorn completely through the hand. H. G. T.—(Vol. iii. p. 258.)

Charm for the Thrush.—On visiting one of my parishioners, whose infant was ill with the thrush, I asked her what medicine she had given the child? She replied, she had done nothing to it but say the eighth Psalm over it. I found that her cure was to repeat the eighth Psalm over

the infant three times three days running; and on my expressing a doubt as to the efficacy of the remedy, she appealed to the case of another of her children who had suffered badly from the thrush, but had been cured by the use of no other means. If it was said "with the virtue," it was, she declared, an unfailing cure. The mention, in this Psalm, of "the mouths of babes and sucklings," I suppose led to its selection. W. Fraser.—(Vol. viii. p. 146.)

Tor Mohun.

"Take three rushes from any running stream, and pass them separately through the mouth of the infant: then plunge the rushes again into the stream, and as the current bears them away, so will the thrush depart from the child."

Should this, as is not unlikely, prove ineffectual, "Capture the nearest duck that can be met with, and place its mouth, wide open, within the mouth of the sufferer. The cold breath of the duck will be inhaled by the child, and the disease will gradually, and as I have been informed, not the less surely, take its departure."

T. Hughes.—(Vol. viii. p. 265.)

Storms from Conjuring.—A common Devonshire remark on the rising of a storm is, "Ah! there is a conjuring going on somewhere." The following illustration was told me by an old inhabitant of this parish. In the parish of St. Mary Tavy is a spot called "Steven's grave," from a suicide said to have been buried there. His spirit proving troublesome to the neighbourhood, was laid by a former curate one Sunday after afternoon service. A man who accompanied the clergyman on the way was told by him to make haste home, as a storm was coming. The man hurried away home; but though the afternoon had previously been very fine, he had scarcely reached his door before a violent thunder-storm came to verify the clergyman's words.

The Heath-hounds.—The *brutende heer* are sometimes heard near Dartmoor, and are known by the appellation of

"Heath-hounds." They were heard in the parish of St. Mary Tavy several years ago by an old man called Roger Burn: he was working in the fields, when he suddenly heard the baying of the hounds, the shouts and horn of the huntsman, and the smacking of his whip. This last point the old man quoted as at once settling the question. "How could I be mistaken? why I heard the very smacking of his whip."

A Cock scares the Fiend.—Mr. N. was a Devonshire squire who had been so unfortunate as to sell his soul to the devil, with the condition that after his funeral the fiend should take possession of his skin. He had also persuaded a neighbour to undertake to be present on the occasion of the flaying. On the death of Mr. N., this man went in a state of great alarm to the parson of the parish, and asked his advice. By him he was told to fulfil his engagement, but he must be sure and carry a cock into the church with him. On the night after the funeral, the man proceeded to the church armed with the cock; and, as an additional security, took up his position in the parson's pew. At twelve o'clock the devil arrived, opened the grave, took the corpse from the coffin and flayed it. When the operation was concluded, he held the skin up before him, and remarked: "Well! 'twas not worth coming for after all, for it is all full of holes!" As he said this, the cock crew; whereupon the fiend, turning round to the man, exclaimed: "If it had not been for the bird you have got there under your arm, I would have your skin too." But, thanks to the cock, the man got home safe again.

Cranmere Pool.—Cranmere Pool, in the centre of Dartmoor, is a great penal settlement for refractory spirits. Many of the former inhabitants of this parish are still there expiating their ghostly pranks. An old farmer was so troublesome to his survivors as to require seven clergymen to secure him. By their means, however, he was transformed into a colt; and a servant-boy was directed to take him to Cranmere Pool. On arriving at the brink of the pool, he was to take off the halter, and return instantly

without looking round. Curiosity proving too powerful, he turned his head to see what was going on, when he beheld the colt plunge into the lake in the form of a ball of fire. Before doing so, however, he gave the lad a parting salute in the form of a kick, which knocked out one of his eyes.

J. M. (4.)—(Vol. iii. p. 404.)

St. Mary Tavy.

Days of the Week:—

"Born on a Sunday, a gentleman;
Monday, fair in face;
Tuesday, full of grace;
Wednesday, sour and grum;
Thursday, welcome home;
Friday, free in giving;
Saturday, work hard for your living."

Tuesday and Wednesday are lucky days.

Thursday has one lucky hour, viz. the hour before the sun rises.

Friday is unlucky.

It is very unlucky to turn a featherbed on a Sunday; my housemaid says she would not turn my bed on a Sunday on any account.

"To sneeze on Monday hastens anger,
Tuesday, kiss a stranger.
Wednesday.
Thursday.
Friday, give a gift.
Saturday, receive a gift.
Sunday, before you break your fast,
You'll see your true love before a week's past."

My informant cannot recollect the consequences of sneezing on Wednesday and Thursday.

"Sneeze on Sunday morning fasting,
You'll enjoy your own true love to everlasting."

If you sneeze on a Saturday night after the candle is lighted, you will next week see a stranger you never saw before.

A new moon seen over the right shoulder is lucky, over

the left shoulder unlucky, and straight before prognosticates good luck to the end of the moon.

Hair and nails should always be cut during the waning of the moon.

Whatever you think of when you see a star shooting, you are sure to have.

When you first see the new moon in the new year, take your stocking off from one foot, and run to the next stile; when you get there, between the great toe and the next, you will find a hair, which will be the colour of your lover's.

When you first see the new moon after midsummer, go to a stile, turn your back to it, and say,—

> "All hail, new moon, all hail to thee!
> I prithee good moon, reveal to me
> This night who shall my true love be:
> Who he is, and what he wears,
> And what he does all months and years."

To see a Lover in a Dream.—Pluck yarrow from a young man's grave, saying as you do so—

> "Yarrow, sweet yarrow, the first that I have found,
> And in the name of Jesus I pluck it from the ground.
> As Joseph loved sweet Mary, and took her for his dear,
> So in a dream this night, I hope my true love will appear."

Sleep with the yarrow under the pillow.

J. M. (4.)—(Vol. iv. p. 98.)

Still-born Children.—One of the Commissioners of Devonport complaining last week that a charge of one shilling and sixpence should have been made upon the parish authorities for the grave and interment of a still-born child, said, "When I was a young man it was thought lucky to have a still-born child put into any open grave, as it was considered to be a sure passport to heaven for the next person buried there." R. R.—(Vol. v. p. 77.)

Cure for Fits.—I forward you a copy of a paragraph

which appeared in *The Times* of March 7, 1854, and which is worth a corner in your folk-lore columns: —

"The following gross case of superstition, which occurred as late as Sunday se'nnight, in one of the largest market towns in the north of Devon, is related by an eye-witness: — A young woman, living in the neighbourhood of Holsworthy, having for some time past been subject to periodical fits of illness, endeavoured to effect a cure by attendance at the afternoon service at the parish church, accompanied by thirty young men, her near neighbours. Service over, she sat in the porch of the church, and each of the young men, as they passed out in succession, dropped a penny into her lap; but the last, instead of a penny, gave her half-a-crown, taking from her the twenty-nine pennies which she had already received. With this half-crown in her hand, she walked three times round the communion-table, and afterwards had it made into a ring, by the wearing of which she believes she will recover her health."

HAUGHMOND ST. CLAIR. — (Vol. ix. p. 344.)

Extraordinary Superstition: —

"An instance of the intense feeling of superstition which pervades the ignorant among our rural population in the west of England occurred at Northlew last week. Some gipsies having encamped in the neighbourhood, one of the female members of the tribe ascertained from the wife of a farm labourer that she had a daughter in the last stage of consumption. The gipsy represented that the child had been 'bewitched;' and that she could rule the spell, which would effect a cure, for two sovereigns. The mother of the child cheerfully paid the money, but the next day the wily gipsy returned it, and said it was not sufficient, but 20*l.* more in gold would do it. The cottager's wife, in her native simplicity, went and borrowed 10*l.* from a neighbour; and, with another ten sovereigns she had in the house saved from her husband's earnings, added the 20*l.* to the 2*l.* already in the gipsy's hands. Soon as the money was paid, the affrighted woman was bound over to secrecy by the gipsy, who mumbled out a few disjointed texts of Scripture, and left with the promise that the child would be cured on the following Friday, when an angel would appear and return the money. Since that time, however, it is needless to add, that neither gipsy nor money have turned up, although the impoverished husband and the police have been daily on the look out for the gipsy impostor. On Sunday last another specimen of deep-rooted superstition was presented within the porch of the western door at Exeter Cathedral. As the congregation were leaving the church, a decrepit old woman took up a position within the porch, bearing a begging petition, setting forth that she had been attacked

by a paralytic seizure, and had been recommended by 'the wise woman' to get a penny each from forty single men on leaving the church, and her infirmity would by this charm be banished for ever."—*Exeter Paper.*

S. R. P.—(Vol. x. p. 321.)

LEGEND OF HAYDON'S GULLY.

In the parish of Hinton-Blewett, North Somersetshire, or immediately adjoining it, in the direction of West Harptree, there is a wooded gorge in the hill-side, through which runs a small stream, and which is called "Haydon's Gully." I have lately heard the following tradition respecting it; viz., that a gentleman named Colonel Haydon, who was accused of high treason, used to spend his nights under his brother's roof, somewhere in the neighbourhood, and every morning came and backed his horse into a hole in the bank, where he spent the day in order to evade his pursuers. This story, which, if it has any truth in it, probably refers to Monmouth's days, is worth inquiring into.

ARTHUR WRIGHT.—(Vol. iv. p. 54.)

SOMERSETSHIRE FOLK LORE.

1. All texts heard in a church ought to be remembered by the congregation, for they must be repeated at the day of judgment.

2. If the clock strikes while the text is being given, a death may be expected in the parish.

3. A death in the parish during the Christmas tyde is a token of many deaths in the year. I remember such a circumstance being spoken of in a village of Somerset. Thirteen died in that year, a very unusual number. Very many attributed this great loss of life to the fact above stated.

4. When a corpse is laid out, a plate of salt is laid on the chest.

5. None can die comfortably under the cross-beam of a house. I knew a man of whom it was said at his death,

that after many hours hard dying, being removed from the position under the cross-beam, he departed peaceably. I cannot account for the origin of this saying.

6. Ticks in the oak-beams of old houses, or death-watches so called, warn the inhabitants of that dwelling of some misfortune.

7. Coffin-rings, when dug out of a grave, are worn to keep off the cramp.

8. Water from the font is good for ague and rheumatism.

9. No moon, in its change, ought to be seen through a window.

10. Turn your money on hearing the first cuckoo.

11. The cattle low and kneel on Christmas eve.

12. Should a corpse be ever carried through any path, &c., that path cannot be done away with. For cases, see Wales, Somerset, Bampton, Devon.

13. On the highest mound of the hill above Weston-super-Mare, is a heap of stones, to which every fisherman in his daily walk to Sand Bay, Kewstoke, contributes one towards his day's good fishing.

14. Smothering hydrophobic patients is still spoken of in Somerset as so practised.

15. Origin of the saying, "I'll send you to Jamaica." Did it not take its source from the unjudge-like sentence of Judge Jeffries to those who suffered without sufficient evidence, for their friendly disposition towards the Duke of Monmouth: "to be sent —— —— to the plantations of Jamaica?" Many innocent persons were so cruelly treated in Somerset.

16. The nurse who brings the infant to be baptized bestows upon the first person she meets on her way to the church whatever bread and cheese she can offer, *i. e.*, according to the condition of the parents.

17. In Devonshire it is thought unlucky not to catch the first butterfly.

18. Mackerel not in season till the lesson of the 23rd and 24th of Numbers is read in church. I cannot account for

this saying. A better authority could have been laid down for the remembering of such like incidents. You may almost form a notion yourself without any help. The common saying is, Mackerel is in season when Balaam's ass speaks in church. M. A. BALLIOL.—(Vol. ix. p. 536.)

M. A. BALLIOL says, that, on the highest mound of the hill above Weston-super-Mare is a heap of stones, to which every fisherman, in his daily walk to Sand Bay, Kewstoke, contributes one towards his day's good fishing. Although the object ascribed to a similar custom in Greece is of a different character, your readers may feel interested in the following passage describing it, from Gell's *Narrative of a Journey in the Morea*, p. 113.:

"On the road from Tragoge to Andrutzena we passed one of those heaps of stones, called by the Greeks *anathemas*. A person who has a quarrel with another, collects a pile of stones, and curses his unconscious foe as many times as there are stones in the heap. It is the duty of every Christian to add at least one pebble as he passes by, so that the curses in a frequented road become innumerable. A Greek who should travel on one of our English roads, would imagine the whole population at war; and in Italy, where the heaps are larger, and generally occupy the whole of the best part of the road, he would be disposed to add another curse to fall upon the roadmakers themselves."

N. L. T. — (Vol. x. p. 37.)

WITCHCRAFT IN SOMERSETSHIRE.

Perhaps the following account of superstitions now entertained in some parts of Somersetshire, will be interesting to the inquirers into the history of witchcraft. I was lately informed by a member of my congregation that two children living near his house were bewitched. I made inquiries into the matter, and found that witchcraft is by far less uncommon than I had imagined. I can hardly adduce the two children as an authenticated case, because the medical gentleman who attended them pronounced their illness to be a kind of ague: but I leave the two following cases on

record in "N. & Q." as memorable instances of witchcraft in the nineteenth century.

A cottager, who does not live five minutes' walk from my house, found his pig seized with a strange and unaccountable disorder. He, being a sensible man, instead of asking the advice of a veterinary surgeon, immediately went to the white witch (a gentleman who drives a flourishing trade in this neighbourhood). He received his directions, and went home and implicitly followed them. In perfect silence, he went to the pigsty; and lancing each foot and both ears of the pig, he allowed the blood to run into a piece of common dowlas. Then taking two large pins, he pierced the dowlas in opposite directions; and still keeping silence entered his cottage, locked the door, placed the bloody rag upon the fire, heaped up some turf over it, and reading a few verses of the Bible, waited till the dowlas was burned. As soon as this was done, he returned to the pigsty; found his pig perfectly restored to health, and *mirabile dictu!* as the white witch had predicted, the old woman, who it was supposed had bewitched the pig, came to inquire after the pig's health. The animal never suffered a day's illness afterwards. My informant was the owner of the pig himself.

Perhaps, when I heard this story, there may have been a lurking expression of doubt upon my face, so that my friend thought it necessary to give me farther proof. Some time ago a lane in this town began to be looked upon with a mysterious awe, for every evening a strange white rabbit would appear in it, and, running up and down, would mysteriously disappear. Dogs were frequently put on the scent, but all to no purpose, the white rabbit could not be caught; and rumours soon began to assert pretty confidently, that the white rabbit was nothing more nor less than a witch. The man whose pig had been bewitched was all the more confident; as every evening when the rabbit appeared, he had noticed the bed-room window of his old enemy's house open! At last a large party of bold-hearted men one evening were successful enough to find the white

rabbit in a garden, the only egress from which is through a narrow passage between two cottages, all the rest of the garden being securely surrounded by brick-walls. They placed a strong guard in this entry to let nothing pass, while the remainder advanced as skirmishers among the cabbages: one of these was successful, and caught the white rabbit by the ears, and, not without some trepidation, carried it towards the reserve in the entry. But, as he came nearer to his friends, his courage grew; and gradually all the wrongs his poor pig had suffered, took form and vigour in a powerful kick at the poor little rabbit! No sooner had he done this than, he cannot tell how, the rabbit was out of his grasp; the people in the entry saw it come, but could not stop it; through them all it went, and has never been seen again. But now to the proof of the witchcraft. The old woman, whom all suspected, was laid up in her bed for three days afterwards, unable to walk about: all in consequence of the kick she had received in the shape of a white rabbit! S. A. S. — (Vol. vii. p. 613.)

Bridgewater.

EAST NORFOLK FOLK LORE.

Cure for Fits.—Nine or eleven young men or maidens (an odd number is indispensable) contribute each a silver coin for the manufacture of the ring. A friend of the sufferer gives out that he is making a collection for the purpose, and calls on the parties expected to contribute, and the coins must be given *unasked*, to ensure its efficacy. A watchmaker in my parish tells me that he has made ten or a dozen such rings within as many years, and that he has full faith in their curative properties.

Cure for Ague. — Being afflicted two years since with a severe tertian ague, I was solicited, after the usual medical treatment had failed, by a lady to take as much of the *snuff of a candle* as would lie on a sixpence, made into an electuary with honey. I complied; and, strange to say, a complete cure was effected. Whether the nausea con-

sequent on such an unpleasant remedy had any effect on the spasmodic nature of the malady, I cannot say; but the fact is certain, and it is esteemed a sovereign specific by the Norfolk rustics. E. S. TAYLOR.—(Vol. iv. p. 54.)

The cure for ague mentioned by MR. E. S. TAYLOR above, I have just learnt has been practised with much success by some lady friends of mine for some years past amongst the poor of the parishes in which they have lived. From the number of cures effected by them, I have sent the same application (with the exception of using ginger instead of honey) to a relative of mine in India, who has been suffering from ague acutely, and am anxiously waiting to hear the result. It would be satisfactory to have the medical nature of the remedy, as well as its effects, accounted for; but I fear this would be considered as out of your province. W. H. P.—(Vol. iv. p. 251.)

In this remote district of the county, bordering on the sea-coast, viz. the Hundreds of Flegg, I have discovered many superstitious observances, &c., which, perhaps, will interest lovers of ancient folk-lore. I subjoin a few which have lately come under my notice.

Prayer.—

"Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on!
Four corners to my bed,
Five angels there lie spread;
Two at my head,
Two at my feet,
One at my heart, my soul to keep."

The preceding, I have reason to believe, is in constant use among the cottagers who have not received better instruction.

Charm for Burns.—

"An angel came from the north,
And he brought cold and frost;
An angel came from the south,
And he brought heat and fire;

The angel from the north
Put out the fire.
In the name of the Father, and
Of the Son and of the Holy Ghost!"

Preservative for Horses.—The following took place about two years since. A man in this neighbourhood was observed for a long time to drive a horse, round whose neck something was tied, which he said would act as a preservative against every mishap, stumbling included. This, when stolen by a mischievous urchin, at the instigation of some village wags, was found to be the thumb of an old leather glove, containing a transcript of the Lord's Prayer.

I imagine this to be a charm against the evil eye (mal-occhio), such as one observes constantly in Italy and the cities of the Levant.

Weather Rhyme. — On conversing this spring with a labourer, he expressed his fears that this would be a cold and late spring, judging from the fineness of the weather on Candlemas Day.

"When Candlemas Day is fine and clear,
A shepherd would rather see his wife on the bier."

This, and a mass of others, some excessively curious, are comprised in "Proverbs, Adages, and Popular Superstitions, still preserved in the Parish of Irstead," a paper communicated to the Norfolk and Norwich Archæological Society, by the Rev. John Gunn, and printed in their *Transactions*, vol. ii. pp. 291—309.

Bees.—The hives are regularly put in mourning by having a piece of crape attached, and if they swarm on rotten wood, it is considered that it portends a death in the family.

Cure for Swellings.—The rector of a neighbouring parish was solicited (in vain of course) for the loan of the church plate, to lay on the stomach of a child, which was much swelled from some mesenteric disease, this being held to be a sovereign remedy in such cases.

E. S. Taylor. —(Vol. vi. p. 480.)

Martham, Norfolk.

CHESHIRE FOLK LORE.

There is in this town (Congleton), a little girl, about thirteen years old, in great request among the poor as a charmer in cases of burns or scalds. Immediately on the accident the girl is fetched from her work in the mill; on her arrival she kneels down by the side of the sufferer, mutters a few words, and touches the individual, and the people believe and affirm that the sufferings immediately cease, as she has charmed the fire out of the parts injured. The surgeon's aid is then called in to heal the sores. The girl affirms that she found it out herself by reading her Bible, of which the wonder-working charm is a verse. She will take no reward, nor may any of her relatives; if she or they were, her power would be at an end. She is an ordinary, merry, playful girl; as a surgeon I often come across her in such accidents.

I know some other such charmers in Cheshire, but none so young. One, an old man, stops bleedings of all kinds by a similar charm, viz. a verse from the Bible. But he does not require to be at the patient's side, his power being equally efficacious at the distance of one hundred miles, as close by. E. W. L. — (Vol. iv. p. 405.)

Cure for hooping cough.—Whilst passing a short time in the neighbourhood of Alderley in Cheshire, I found, among other instances of Folk Lore prevailing there, the propriety of communicating to the bees the death of any of the family keeping hives. I learnt also another case, that of a speedy and efficacious cure for the troublesome complaint the hooping cough, which I think ought to be put on record for the comfort of all mothers and children. The remedy consists in a plain currant cake, to be eaten by the afflicted child, the main virtue of which cake is, however, in its being made by a woman whose maiden name was the same as that of the man she married; and on no account whatever is any payment or compensation to be made directly or indirectly for

the cake. My informant has the firmest belief in this specific, he himself having witnessed, in the case of his own child, the beneficial result; but he took care to mention, as probably an advantage, that the cake which cured his child was made by a woman whose mother had also married her namesake. F. R. A.—(Vol. vi. p. 71.)

STANTON DREW AND ITS TRADITION.

At the little village of Stanton Drew, in the county of Somerset, east of the road between Bristol and Wells, stands a well-known Druidical monument, which, in the opinion of Dr. Stukeley, was more ancient than that at Abury. It consists (according to a recent writer) of four groups of stones, forming (or, rather, having formed when complete) two circles; and two other figures, one an ellipse. Although the largest stones are much inferior in their dimensions to those at Stonehenge and Abury, they are by no means contemptible; some of them being nine feet in height and twenty-two feet in girth. There is a curious tradition very prevalent amongst the country people, respecting the origin of these remains, which they designate the "Evil Wedding," for the following good and substantial reasons:—Many hundred years ago (on a Saturday evening), a newly married couple, with their relatives and friends, met on the spot now covered by these ruins, to celebrate their nuptials. Here they feasted and danced right merrily, until the clock tolled the hour of midnight, when the piper (a pious man) refused to play any longer: this was much against the wish of the guests, and so exasperated the bride (who was fond of dancing), that she swore with an oath, she would not be baulked in her enjoyment by a beggarly piper, but would find a substitute, if she went to hell to fetch one. She had scarcely uttered the words, when a venerable old man, with a long beard, made his appearance, and having listened to their request, proffered his services, which were right gladly accepted. The old gentleman (who was no other than the Arch-fiend

himself) having taken the seat vacated by the godly piper, commenced playing a slow and solemn air, which on the guests remonstrating he changed into one more lively and rapid. The company now began to dance, but soon found themselves impelled round the performer so rapidly and mysteriously, that they would all fain have rested. But when they essayed to retire, they found, to their consternation, that they were moving faster and faster round their diabolical musician, who had now resumed his original shape. Their cries for mercy were unheeded, until the first glimmering of day warned the fiend that he must depart. With such rapidity had they moved, that the gay and sportive assembly were now reduced to a ghastly troop of skeletons. "I leave you," said the fiend, "a monument of my power and your wickedness to the end of time:" which saying he vanished. The villagers, on rising in the morning, found the meadow strewn with large pieces of stone, and the pious piper lying under a hedge, half dead with fright, he having been a witness to the whole transaction. DAVID STEVENS. — (Vol. iv. p. 3.)

Godalming.

LEGEND OF THE ROBIN REDBREAST.

The following beautiful legend of the Robin Redbreast may perhaps be new to some of your readers.

"Eusebia. — Like that sweet superstition current in Brittany, which would explain the cause why the Robin Redbreast has always been a favourite and *protégé* of man. While our Saviour was bearing His Cross, one of these birds, they say, took one thorn from His crown, which dyed its breast; and ever since that time robin redbreasts have been the friends of man." — *Communications with the Unseen World*, p. 26.

W. FRASER.—(Vol. iv. p. 506.)

It was on the day when Lord Jesu felt His pain upon the bitter cross of wood, that a small and tender bird

which had hovered awhile around, drew nigh about the seventh hour, and nestled upon the wreath of Syrian thorns. And when the gentle creature of the air beheld those cruel spikes, the thirty and three, which pierced that bleeding brow, she was moved with compassion and the piety of birds; and she sought to turn aside, if but one of those thorns, with her fluttering wings and her lifted feet! It was in vain! She did but rend her own soft breast, until blood flowed over her feathers from the wound! Then said a voice from among the angels, "Thou hast done well, sweet daughter of the boughs! Yea, and I bring thee tidings of reward. Henceforth from this very hour, and because of this deed of thine, it shall be that in many a land thy race and kind shall bear upon their bosoms the hue and banner of thy faithful blood; and the children of every house shall yearn with a natural love towards the birds of the ruddy breast, and shall greet their presence in its season with a voice of thanksgiving!" HENNA.†

Morwenstow.

Your correspondent will, I think, find a more satisfactory solution to the proposed question on the reputation of the Robin in the fact that this is the only singing-bird which in a wild state approaches near to the dwelling of man. While the sparrow is the only bird in constant attendance on the human biped, the Robin is the only one which in the closest districts cheers him with a song. In my garden here at Pentonville I have heard the Robin daily since the third week in August this year: and though the little wren, the greenfinch, the tomtit, and several other birds, visit us, the Robin is the only one which claims popular attention; and this he certainly deserves. I frequently hear him long before daylight; and I experience no greater pleasure at this season than enjoying the fresh air in my garden before daybreak, when several Robins in good song maintain a friendly converse, in their melodious way, from the tops of neighbouring trees. The peculiarly full and fluent melody, though consisting of only a few notes, has a great charm for townsmen, and at most houses it is customary to throw

out crumbs for the Robin. The fearlessness, and (if it might be said) the love of man which the Robin evinces must, I am sure, be the chief element in our partiality for him. SHIRLEY HIBBERD.—(Vol. vi. p. 344.)

Welsh Legend of the Redbreast.—According to my old nurse (a Carmarthenshire woman), the redbreast, like Prometheus, is the victim φιλανθρώπου τρόπου. Not only the babes in the wood, but mankind at large, are indebted to these deserving favourites. How could any child help regarding with grateful veneration the little bird with bosom red, when assured—

"That far, far, far away is a land of woe, darkness, spirits of evil, and *fire*. Day by day does the little bird bear in his bill a drop of water to quench the flame. So near to the burning stream does he fly, that his dear little feathers are *scorched*: and hence he is named Bron-*rhuddyn*.* To serve little children, the robin dares approach the Infernal Pit. No good child will hurt the devoted benefactor of man. The robin returns from the land of *fire*, and therefore he feels the *cold* of winter far more than his brother birds. He shivers in the brumal blast; hungry, he chirps before your door. Oh! my child, then, in gratitude throw a few crumbs to poor red-breast."

Why, a Pythagorean would have eaten a peacock sooner than one of us would have injured a robin.

R. P.—(Vol. vii. p. 328.)

FOLK LORE OF LANCASHIRE.

Lancashire, like all other counties, has its own peculiar superstitions, manners, and customs, which find no parallels in those of other localities. It has also, no doubt, many local observances, current opinions, old proverbs, and vulgar ditties, which are held and known in common with the inhabitants of a greater extent of county, and differ merely in minor particulars;—the necessary result of imperfect oral transmission.

1. If a person's hair, when thrown into the fire, burns

* Bron-rhuddyn = "breast-burnt," or "breast-scorched."

brightly, it is a sure sign that the individual will live long. The brighter the flame the longer life, and *vice versâ*.

2. A young person frequently stirs the fire with the poker to test the humour of a lover. If the fire blaze brightly, the lover is *good-humoured;* and *vice versâ*.

3. A crooked sixpence, or a copper coin with a hole through, are accounted *lucky* coins.

4. Cutting or paring the nails of the hands or feet on a Friday or Sunday, is very unlucky.

5. If a person's *left* ear burn, or feel hot, somebody is *praising* the party; if the *right* ear burn, then it is a sure sign that some one is speaking evil of the person.

6. Children are frequently cautioned by their parents not to walk *backwards* when going an errand; it is a sure sign that they will be unfortunate in their objects.

7. Witchcraft, and the belief in its reality, is not yet exploded in many of the rural districts. The writer is acquainted with parties who place full credence in persons possessing the power to bewitch cows, sheep, horses, and even those persons to whom the witch has an antipathy. One respectable farmer assured me that his horse was *bewitched into the stable through a loophole twelve inches by three;* the *fact* he said was beyond doubt, for he had locked the stable-door himself when the horse was in the field, and had kept the key in his pocket. Soon after this, however, a party of farmers went through a process known by the name of "*burning the witch out*," or "*killing the witch*," as some express it; the person suspected soon died, and the neighbourhood became free from his evil doings.

8. A horse-shoe is still nailed behind many doors to counteract the effects of witchcraft; a *hag-stone* with a hole through, tied to the key of the stable-door, protects the horses, and, if hung up at the bed's head, the farmer also.

9. A hot iron put into the cream during the process of churning, expels the witch from the churn; and dough in preparation for the baker is protected by being marked with the figure of a cross.

10. Warts are cured by being rubbed over with a black snail, but the snail must afterwards be impaled upon a hawthorn. If a bag containing as many small pebbles as a person has warts, be tossed over the *left* shoulder, it will transfer the warts to whoever is unfortunate enough to pick up the bag.

11. If black snails are seized by the horn and tossed over the *left* shoulder, the process will insure *good luck* to the person who performs it.

12. Profuse bleeding is said to be instantly stopped by certain persons who pretend to possess the secret of a certain form of words which immediately act as a charm.

13. The power of bewitching, producing evil to parties by *wishing* it, &c., is supposed to be transmitted from one possessor to another when one of the parties is about to die. The writer is in possession of full particulars respecting this supposed transfer.

14. Cramp is effectually prevented by placing the shoes with the *toes* just peeping from beneath the coverlet: the same is also prevented by tying the garter round the *left* leg *below* the knee.

15. Charmed rings are worn by many for the cure of dyspepsia; and so also are charmed belts for the cure of rheumatism.

16. A *red-haired* person is supposed to bring in ill-luck if he be the first to enter a house on New Year's Day. *Black-haired* persons are rewarded with liquor and small gratuities for "taking in the new year" to the principal houses in their respective neighbourhoods.

17. If any householder's fire does not burn *through* the night of New Year's Eve, it betokens bad luck during the ensuing year; and if any party allow another a live coal, or even a lighted candle, on such an occasion, the bad luck is extended to the other party for commiserating with the former in his misfortunes.

Many other specimens of the folk lore of this district might be enumerated; but since many here have implicit faith in Lover's expression,—

"There is luck in *odd* numbers;"

I will reserve them for a future opportunity, considering that *seventeen* paragraphs are sufficient to satisfy all except the most thorough-paced *folk-lorians*.

T. T. WILKINSON.—(Vol. iii. p. 55.)

Burnley.

A man must never "go a courting" on a Friday. If an unlucky fellow is caught with his lady-love on that day, he is followed home by a band of musicians playing on pokers, tongs, pan-lids, &c., unless he can rid himself of his tormentors by giving them money to drink with.

That hooping-cough will never be taken by any child which has ridden upon a bear. While bear baiting was in fashion, great part of the owner's profits arose from the money given by parents whose children had had a ride. The writer knows of cases in which the charm is said certainly to have been effectual.

That hooping-cough may be cured by tying a hairy caterpillar in a small bag round the child's neck, and as the caterpillar dies the cough goes.

That Good Friday is the best day of all the year to begin weaning children, which ought if possible to be put off till that day; and a strong hope is sometimes entertained that a very cross child will "be better" after it has been christened.

That May cats are unlucky, and will suck the breath of children.

That crickets are lucky about a house, and will do no harm to those who use them well; but that they eat holes in the worsted stockings of such members of the family as kill them. I was assured of this on the experience of a respectable farmer's family.

The belief in ghosts, or bogards, as they are termed, is universal.

In my neighbourhood I hardly know a dell where a running stream crosses a road by a small bridge or stone plat, where there is not frectnin (frightening) to be

expected. Wells, ponds, gates, &c., have often this bad repute. I have heard of a calf with eyes like a saucer, a woman without a head, a white greyhound, a column of white foam like a large sugar loaf in the midst of a pond, a group of little cats, &c., &c., as the shape of the bogard, and sometimes a lady who jumped behind hapless passengers on horseback. It is supposed that a Romish priest can lay them, and that it is best to cheat them to consent to being laid while hollies are green. Hollies being evergreens, the ghost can reappear no more. P. P.

Most of, if not all the instances mentioned by Mr. Wilkinson are, as might be expected, current also in the adjacent district of the West Riding of Yorkshire; and, by his leave, I will add a few more, which are familiar to me.

If a cock near the door crows with his face towards it, it is a sure prediction of the arrival of a stranger.

If the cat frisks about the house in an unusually lively manner, windy or stormy weather is approaching.

If a dog howls under a window at night, a death will shortly happen in that house.

If a *female* be the first to enter a house on Christmas or New Year's day, she brings ill luck to that house for the coming year.

For hooping-cough, pass the child nine times over the back and under the belly of an ass. (This ceremony I once witnessed, but cannot vouch for its having had the desired effect.)

For warts, rub them with a cinder, and this tied up in paper and dropped where four roads meet, will transfer the warts to whoever opens the packet.

J. Eastwood.—(Vol. iii. p. 510.)

Ecclesfield.

A TEST OF WITCHCRAFT.

Among the many tests applied for the discovery of witchcraft was the following. It is, I believe, a singular instance, and but little known to the public. It was resorted to as

recently as 1759, and may be found in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of that year.

"One *Susannah Hannokes*, an elderly woman of Wingrove, near Aylesbury, was accused by a neighbour for bewitching her spinning-wheel, so that she could not make it go round, and offered to make oath of it before a majistrate; on which the husband, to justify his wife, insisted upon her being tried by the Church Bible, and that the accuser should be present: accordingly she was conducted to the parish church, where she was stript of all her cloathes to her shift and undercoat, and weighed against the Bible; when, to the no small mortification of her accuser, she outweighed it, and was honorably acquitted of the charge."

A. D. N.—(Vol. ii. p. 404.)

Abingdon.

SHUCK THE DOG-FIEND.

This phantom I have heard many persons in East Norfolk, and even Cambridgeshire, describe as having seen as a black shaggy dog, with fiery eyes, and of immense size, and who visits churchyards at midnight. One witness nearly fainted away at seeing it, and on bringing his neighbours to see the place where he saw it, he found a large spot as if gunpowder had been exploded there. A lane in the parish of Overstrand is called, after him, Shuck's Lane. The name appears to be a corruption of "shag," as *shucky* is the Norfolk dialect for "shaggy." Is not this a vestige of the German "Dog-fiend?"

E. S. T.—(Vol. i. p. 468.)

MAY MARRIAGES.

It so happened that yesterday, I had both a colonial bishop, and a home archdeacon, taking part in the services of my church, and visiting at my house; and by a singular coincidence, both had been solicited to perform the marriage ceremony, not later than to-morrow, (April 30th,) because in neither case would the bride elect submit to be married in the month of May. I find that it is a common notion amongst ladies, that May marriages are unlucky.

Can any one inform me whence this prejudice arose?

ALFRED GATTY. — (Vol. i. p. 467.)

Ecclesfield, April 29. 1850.

[This superstition is as old as Ovid's time, who tells us in his *Fasti*,

"Nec viduæ tædis eadem, nec virginis apta
Tempora. Quæ nupsit non diuturna fuit.
Hac quoque de causa (si te proverbia tangunt),
Mense malas Maio nubere vulgus ait."

The last line, as our readers may remember, was fixed on the gates of Holyrood on the morning (16th of May) after the marriage of Mary Queen of Scots and Bothwell.]

This superstition is one of those which have descended to Christianity from Pagan observances, and which the people have adopted without knowing the cause, or being able to assign a reason. Carmelli tells us that it still prevailed in Italy in 1750.* It was evidently of long standing in Ovid's time, as it had passed then into a proverb among the people; nearly two centuries afterwards Plutarch (*Quæst. Rom.* 86.) puts the question: Διὰ τί τοῦ Μαΐου μηνὸς οὐκ ἄγουσαι γυναῖκας, which he makes a vain endeavour to answer satisfactorily. He assigns three reasons: *first*, because May being between April and June, and April being consecrated to Venus, and June to Juno, those deities held propitious to marriage were not to be slighted. The Greeks were not less observant of fitting seasons and the propitiation of the γαμήλιοι θεὸι. *Secondly*, on account of the great expiatory celebration of the *Lemuria*, when women abstain from the bath and the careful cosmetic decoration of their persons so necessary as a prelude to marriage rites. *Thirdly*, as some say, because May was the month of old men, *Majus a Majoribus*, and therefore June, being thought to be the month of the young, *Junius a Junioribus*, was to be preferred. The Romans, however, held other seasons and days unpropitious to matrimony, as the days in February when the Parentalia were celebrated, &c. *June* was

* Storia di Vari Costumi, t. ii. p. 221.

the favourite month; but no marriage was celebrated without an augury being first consulted and its auspices proved favourable (*Val. Max.* lib. ii. c. 1.). It would be well if some such superstitious observance among us could serve as a check to ill-advised and ill-timed marriages; and I would certainly advise all prudent females to continue to think that

"The girls are all stark naught that wed in May."

S. W. Singer.

Mickleham.

THE LEGEND OF THE SEVEN SISTERS.

The scene of the tragedy from which the following legend has sprung, is the little village of Ballybunion, situated within a few miles of Kerry Head. The scenery around is of the wildest and most striking description. Frowning, rugged cliffs, rising abruptly out of the water to the height of over one hundred feet, and perforated with numerous caves, into which the ocean rushes with fearful fury in winter, — for it is a stormy coast, and rarely does a month pass without beholding some dead, putrified body washed ashore; while inland, a barren, uncultivated plain, consisting mostly of bog, stretches away to nearly the foot of the Reeks, which, looming in the distance, seem to rear their giant masses even to the sky, and form, as it were, an impenetrable barrier between the coast and the interior. On the brink of one of those precipices we have mentioned, there stands the ruins of a castle, seemingly of great antiquity. Nothing now remains but the basement story, and that seems as if it would be able to withstand the war of winds and waves for hundreds of years longer. According to the legend, this castle was inhabited by a gallant chieftain at the period of the incursions of the Danes, and who was the father of seven blooming daughters. He was himself a brave warrior, animated with the greatest hatred against the Ostmen, who, at that period, were laying every part of Erin waste. His sword never rested in its sheath, and day

and night his light gallies cruised about the coast on the watch for any piratical marauder who might turn his prow thither. One day a sail was observed on the horizon; it came nearer and nearer, and the pirate standard was distinguished waving from its mast head. Immediately surrounded by the Irish ships, it was captured after a desperate resistance. Those that remained of the crew were slaughtered and thrown into the sea, with the exception of the captain and his six brothers, who were reserved for a more painful death. Conveyed to the fortress, their wounds were dressed, and they were allowed the free range of the castle. Here, gradually a love sprung between them and the seven Irish maidens, who yielded to their ardent protestations, and agreed to fly with them to Denmark. Everything was arranged for the voyage, and one fearfully stormy night in winter was chosen for the attempt. Not a single star shone in the sky, the cold blast came sweeping from the ocean, the rain fell in torrents, and the water roared and raged with terrific violence amid the rocky caverns. Escaping down from the battlement by a rope-ladder, they discovered to their horror, that on reaching the ground they were surrounded by armed men. Not a word was uttered; but they well knew into whose hands they had fallen. Conducted again within the fortress, they found themselves face to face with their injured father. One deadly glance of hatred he cast on the prisoners, and, muttering some few words to one of his attendants, he pointed towards his daughters. The man, on receiving the command, recoiled a few paces, transfixed with horror; and then he advanced nearer, and seemed as if remonstrating with him. But the parent's face assumed an absolutely demoniac expression; and more peremptorily repeating his order, he stalked out of the room. And now commenced a fearful scene. The lovers were torn from each other's arms, and the women were brought forth again. The storm had grown more violent, and the spray was dashing far over the cliff, whilst the vivid flashes of lightning afforded a horrible illumination to the dreary scene. Procceding

along the brink of the precipice, they at length came to a chasm which resembled somewhat the crater of a volcano, as it was completely closed, with the exception of the opening at the top, and one small aperture below, through which the sea rushed with terrible violence. The rolling of the waters sounded fearfully on the ear of those around, and now at length the sisters divined their fate. One by one they were hurled into the boiling flood: one wild shriek, the billows closed again, and all was over. What the fate of their lovers was, the legend says not. The old castle has crumbled into ruins — the chieftain sleeps in an unknown grave, his very name forgotten; but still the sad ending of the maidens is remembered, and even unto this day the cavern is denominated the "Cave of the Seven Sisters." Such is the above legend as it still exists amongst the peasantry, and any of your contributors would extremely oblige by informing me of the name of the Irish leader. GEORGE OF MUNSTER.—(Vol. ix. p. 465.)

Ballybunnion, and the wild rocks and wolds around it, are rich in traditionary stories, Ossianic, Fairy Lore, and lastly, Giraldine and Cromwellian traditions. The legend alluded to by GEORGE OF MUNSTER was thus narrated to me some years since by a peasant, who claimed legitimate descent in the direct line from the black knight, Fitzgerald of Dingle. One of the Vikingr, or northern sea-kings, invaded Ballybunnion (*i. e.* the land of Bunnion), and invested the chieftain, Bunnion, in his castle. His garrison were slain, and the chieftain, rather than his nine daughters should fall into the hands of the victor, deliberately flung them one after another into the abyss, and followed himself, leaving the deserted castle to the sea-king, which he levelled to the ground, and it was never rebuilt. The cave is called in Irish by the peasantry pol naoi, *i. e.* the *cave of the nine.* J. L.—(Vol. x. p. 112.)

HAIR CUT OFF, AN ANTIDOTE.

A few days ago I observed my old servant thrusting something into the ear of one of my cows. Upon inquiry, I was informed that it was hair cut off the calf's tail, the said calf having been taken away from the cow on the previous morning: the butcher cut it off for the above purpose, "to make her forget the calf." I half resolved on sending this account to "N. & Q.," but I hesitated, under the idea that it would perhaps hardly be worth the while. But this afternoon my eye caught the following scrap in a newspaper just published: —

"At Oldham, last week, a woman summoned the owner of a dog that had bitten her. She said that she should not have adopted this course had the owner of the animal given her some of its hair, to ensure her against any evil consequences following the bite."

There is so much similarity in the two cases, that I now would ask whether your readers can throw any light on the subject? BŒOTICUS. — (Vol. v. p. 581.)

Edgmond, Salop.

CURE OF DISEASE BY MEANS OF SHEEP.

A child in my parish has been for some time afflicted with disease of some of the respiratory organs. The mother was recommended to have it carried through a flock of sheep as they were let out of the fold in the morning. The time was considered to be of importance.

Ɔ. — (Vol. iii. p. 320.)

L—— Rectory, Somerset.

The attempted cure of consumption or some complaints by walking among a flock of sheep is not new. The present Archbishop of Dublin was recommended it, or practised it at least, when young. For pulmonary complaints the principle was perhaps the same as that of following a plough, sleeping in a room over a cowhouse, breathing the diluted smoke of a limekiln, that is, the inhaling of carbonic acid, all practised about the end of the last century, when the

knowledge of the gases was the favourite branch of chemistry.

A friend of mine formerly met Dr. Beddoes riding up Park Street in Bristol almost concealed by a vast bladder tied to his horse's mouth. He said he was trying an experiment with oxygen on a broken-winded horse. Afterwards, finding that oxygen did not answer, he very wisely tried the gas most opposite to it in nature. C. B.—(Vol. iii. p. 367.)

LADY'S TREES.

In some parts of Cornwall, small branches of sea-weed, dried and fastened in turned wooden stands, are set up as ornaments on the chimney-piece, &c. The poor people suppose that they preserve the house from fire, and they are known by the name of "*Lady's trees*," in honour, I presume, of the Virgin Mary. H. G. T.—(Vol. iii. p. 206.)

AN OLD-WORLD VILLAGE AND ITS CHRISTMAS FOLK LORE.

Years hence, in the time of Mr. Macaulay's New Zealander, when the Great Holyhead Road is good pasture, and Cary has sensitive commentators, I don't imagine that the precise locality of Newton Prodgers will be settled without inkshed. It is the very height of improbability that any reader of "N. & Q.," unless he is a taxman, ever went there; still less, having done so once, that he would be desirous of enjoying the felicity twice, for the road to Newton Prodgers is not only not the road to any other place whatsoever, but is moreover the true and only genuine site of the stupendous adventure of the Manchester Bagman, which the Yankees have appropriated with characteristic coolness, and pitched somewhere or other down in Alabama. The thing itself actually occurred to a respectable farmer of our village, no way connected with the public press, who set to work one fine morning to dig out a riding whip, the tip of which he saw sprouting out of the middle of the road.

After an hour's hard digging he came to a hat, and under that, to his intense horror, was a head belonging to a body in a state of advanced suffocation. Assistance was procured, and after several hours of unremitting exertion, worthy of Agassiz or Owen, the entire organism of a bagman was developed. "Now, gentlemen," said the exhumed commercial to his perspiring diggers, who of course concluded their labours finished, "now, gentlemen, you've saved my life; and now, for God's sake, lend a hand to get out my mare!" I am aware that at first sight this anecdote appears to tell against our village; but then everybody knows it is the business of the Little Pudgington folks to mend these roads, and not ours. We never have repaired them, and it is not very likely we shall begin now, for we have a religious antipathy to all innovation, especially when it is likely to touch the rates. In M'Adam's time, when the aforesaid Little Pudgington folks were going to bring the branch turnpike through a corner of Newton Prodgers, we rose as one man, called a public meeting, and passed a resolution expressing strong abhorrence of French principles; and we have not degenerated, for it is only the other day since we thrashed the surveyors of the "Great Amalgamated Central." Search the whole county, and I doubt if you find such another respectable old-fashioned place. When I get out at the Gingham Station, and mount for Newton, after an absence in town, I feel I am stepping back two centuries, and am quite disappointed next morning that the postman don't deliver a Mercurius Politicus with the latest intelligence of his Majesty's Forces in the north, and the last declaration of his Majesty's affectionate Parliament. It is true we have no resident clergyman or squire either since the last Prodgers was cleaned out at Crockford's; but then, by way of set-off, we haven't a school or a sanitary law in the parish; no spelling-books to put improper notions into the people's heads; and as for pig legislation, I should just like to see them try it on at Newton Prodgers, that's all.

Our village is not one of those rural paradises which the adventurous explorer might discover among the properties

at the Adelphi, nor one of Mr. James's receptacles for benighted horsemen, not even one of Miss Mitford's charming villages—all gables and acacia,—nor anything, in short, but a plain average parish of the Bedford Level, still in a state of refreshing pastoral simplicity, or, as our radical paper perversely has it, "frightfully neglected condition." We have a church, green, and stocks in tolerable repair. A green is always the germ of the Saxon thorpe, no matter where found—Schleswig, Kent, Massachusetts, Australia, or New Zealand. In our village, as in most others of our country side, it is called the Cross Hill, and there are yet the steps and part of the shaft of the cross, which no doubt stood there long before the church was thought of, and formed the nucleus of the village. On the left of the cross is the well, the "town well," so called to distinguish it from the "holy well," which is nearer the church, and probably supplied the piscina and font. Opposite the stocks there, with the portentous effigy of an owl *in extremis*, is the Red Eagle, much noted for superlative October; and farther on, at the corner, is the less aristocratic Chequers, where they brew beer very small indeed, which, as I once heard a *habitué* plaintively asseverate, "wets where it goes" and no farther. Three roads branch out of the Cross Hill, one to the church, and two to outlying homesteads. And now the reader knows as much of Newton Prodgers as I do.

When I first knew Newton Prodgers, old John Gibbs was the great man for burning Guys and keeping up the old Christmas customs. He was the Oldbuck of Newton—the Oldbuck without the *Prætorium*—the fogie without the ghastly tie. On working days Jack was not to be distinguished from his labourers; but on Sundays, when he donned his black velvet smalls and leather leggings all tied in true lovers' knots, he looked a "warm" man every inch of him. It was a treat to see him lead his dame up the aisle of the church, and to watch his demeanour during the sermon, trying to look as though he understood it. John was by no means partial to literature, and his reading

was wholly confined to the Family Bible, and the enlivening feats of the "Seven Champions," of which honest John swallowed every morsel—the dragon included. Upon scientific subjects generally, Master Gibbs was very considerably behind the age. His notions of cosmogony and planetary affairs were opposed to those of Humboldt and Herschel, presenting indeed many points of remarkable similarity to the Ptolemeian doctrines of my friend Moravanjee, who lately filled with so much credit the astronomical chair at Benares, modified however, to some extent, by the theories of the late Dr. Francis Moore as yearly perpetuated by the Worshipful Company of Stationers. In politics Jack was a thorough-going Church and King man, and stoutly swore to the last day of his life that tea and pantaloons had ruined England, and worked between them the fall of the corn laws. A more honest, thick-headed, open-hearted, and prejudiced old booby never drew breath. He was the last man for miles round our place who kept open house to all comers; and, I regret to add, he was the identical old rascal who set the bells ringing when the lamented news of the death of the late Sir Robert Peel reached Newton Prodgers. If you took a peep into his stone-floored house-room on Christmas Eve, you would see Misrule *redivivus*. Hodge senior smokes long pipes, plays at cards, and looks on. Adolescent Agriculture dances quaint old country dances not found in the *Ball-room Monitor*, and sings rough old songs in rough old measures that would scandalise Sims Reeves; while the younger fry are wild and dripping at duck-apple, snap-apple, and half a score of other equally intellectual amusements. But the mumming is the great fun of the night. With us this consists of a kind of rude drama, which formerly represented the adventures of St. George and the Dragon; but of late years St. George has given place to George III., and the Dragon been supplanted by Napoleon. In the last scene the emperor indulges in such strong vituperation against Mr. Pitt, and insinuates such unpleasant things about Mr. Pitt's mamma, as to induce that placid gentleman to give him a blow on the nose;

whereupon a fight ensues, in which the pilot gets decidedly the worst of it, and is about to receive the *coup-de-grâce*, when up comes George III. with a cocked-hat and broad-sword, and the royal asseveration —

"As sure as I am England's king, I'll break your neck,"

— a threat which, after a severe encounter, he manages to accomplish, and the Corsican tyrant is finally carried off by Beelzebub, who I should say is a leading member of the company. He was a bold genius, whoever he was, who conceived the idea of making George III. a hero. The fool, whose principal duty is to blow flour into the emperor's eyes, is a relic of the older drama, and carries a stick with a bladder tied to it by way of bauble. He still performs the old legerdemain tricks described by Ben Jonson. When the fun was at its height, the Christmas block used to be brought in and put on the fire, to be taken off again when only half burnt, and preserved in the cellar or some other safe place till next year. This precious piece of charred wood old Jack used to look upon as a sovereign amulet against fire during the ensuing year, and as safe as a fire policy. And this is still the usual custom in our neighbourhood.

It is a grand old superstition that, which represents the powers of darkness as more than usually active on the anniversary of the last day of Pagandom — dim echo through the ages of that first Nativity which silenced the oracles and drove the nymphs from their ancient haunts. Old Smudgers the rat-catcher was quite Miltonic, although he did'nt know it, when he told me "No good Christian would even turn a dog out" on Christmas Eve. All our ghosts have holiday on that night, and we have lots of ghosts of all grades at Newton Prodgers; from that old-established aristocratic old ghost, Sir Miles Prodgers, who drives about the lanes in the same old coach that took him to St. Paul's after Ramillies, down to Mary Potts, who drowned herself in Sludgepond, and is a mere *parvenu* ghost — a spirit of no pretensions whatever. It is the Walpurgis of the witches

and demons on the wolds and in the woods. Ghosts of suicides hold high carnival at dreary cross roads, and he who has courage enough to watch in the churchyard with an ash stick in his hand, will see the fetches of those who are to die during the next year. Sometimes also the wayfarer sees lights and hears solemn music in lonely churches — another fine old idea which has haunted man's mind, ever since Reginald of Durham's friend the Yorkshire monk fell asleep and dreamed of the ghostly mass at Farne. But all this *diablerie* terminates at the first sound of the midnight bells; and the spirit or demon, wherever he is, must hie him back instanter. Old Smudgers, who knows more legends than the brothers Grimm, and has killed incomparably more rats, tells a tale of a dissipated young fellow who, lovelorn and morose, wandered out one Christmas Eve instead of joining the carol singers,—how, full of evil thoughts, he sauntered through the common field, and was accosted by the enemy in the guise of (probably his nearest prototype) a Yorkshire horsedealer, who tried all manner of ways to get hold of him by engaging him in some game of chance, but all without success; till he offered to drink him for a "bag of gold," which our thirsty rustic could not find it in his heart to refuse, and proposed an instantaneous adjournment to the "Red Eagle." "No time like the present," said the old gentleman, drawing out a bottle and a couple of horns; and so they sat down on the hill side, and drank as though for their lives. Dick held out manfully for some time, but felt the liquor gradually stealing away his senses. He sees his adversary's eyes glaring with triumph, and feels a burning grasp at his throat, when suddenly, borne by the breeze over the hills and fens, comes the merry sound of the midnight chimes—ringing out from every tower and steeple down the country side. With a shriek that woke every one up at Mud Wallingham, twenty-one miles off, the Yorkshireman abandoned his prey; and next morning Dick was found with his gold at the bottom of the hill. But the ill-gotten riches never made Dick thrive. His favourite son left him alone in his old age, and he became a miser,

and barred himself up in the old house near the church—still called the "Miser's House." One wintery Christmas Eve, when all was wind and storm without, there was a knock, and a supplication for relief at his door; but all the beggar got was a curse. Next morning the body of his long-lost son was found frozen on the step, and that day the old man died—but not to rest: for, at a certain hour on Christmas Eve, the wretched old miser unbars the window with his bony hands, and showers down, from between the old stanchions, coins of a date and coinage long passed away; of late years, probably because of the unhappy scarcity of specie, he has been less liberal; but Smudgers watched once, a long time ago, and picked up a penny which he has still carefully wrapped up in silver paper, beneath the false bottom of his old chest.

N.B. Smudgers is indisputably the biggest liar in our village. V. T. Sternberg.—(Vol. x. p. 501.)

SPRINGS AND WELLS.

Near to *Wooler*, in Northumberland, on the flanks of the Cheviots, there is a spring of water locally known as *Pin Well*. The country maids, in passing this spring, drop a crooked pin into the water.

In Westmoreland there is also a *Pin Well*, into the waters of which rich and poor drop a pin in passing.

The superstition, in both cases, consists in a belief that the well is under the charge of a fairy, and that it is necessary to propitiate the little lady by a present of some sort; hence the pin as most convenient. The crooked pin of Northumberland may be explained upon the received hypothesis, in folk-lore, that crooked things are lucky things, as a "crooked sixpence," &c.

There are many interesting superstitions connected with springs and wells, and, like most of superstition, there is a basis of truth when understood. There were sacred wells in ancient days, and there are numerous holy wells in Christian times. One well is reputed as "good for sprains,"

another spring is "good for sore eyes." There is a spring about five miles from Alnwick in Northumberland, known as *Senna Well*, and many other medicinal springs and wells may be enumerated. There are the world-renowned waters of Bath, of Buxton, of Matlock, of Harrowgate, of Cheltenham, of Malvern, &c., in England; but there are also springs and wells in the by-ways, having old legends connected with them, and it is to these I wish to draw attention through the pages of "N. & Q." The larger wells on the highways may be left to the puffing guide books, and to their daylight fame; but I, for one, should like to be made acquainted with the springs and wells which, from time to time beyond the memory of man, have been held to make sound the lame, to cure diseases, to brew good beer, and, in more modern times, to make good tea. Should there be any fairy tale attached, I trust the writer will reveal it. *Folk-lore* is of more use than the unreflecting imagine. ROBERT RAWLINSON.—(Vol. vi. p. 28.)

On this part of the coast of Pembrokeshire, between Tenby and the entrance to Milford Haven, is a small bay, steep in its sides, and so lashed by surf as rarely to permit a boat to land. Here is the hermitage (or chapel) of St. Gawen, or Goven, in which there is a well, the water of which, and the clay near, is used for sore eyes. Besides this, a little below the chapel, is another well, with steps leading down to it, which is visited by persons from distant parts of the principality, for the cure of scrofula, paralysis, dropsy, and other complaints. Nor is it the poor alone who make this pilgrimage: a case came more immediately under my notice, where a lady, a person of some fortune, having been for some time a sufferer from a severe attack of paralysis, which prevented her putting her hand in her pocket, took up her quarters at a farm-house near the well, and after visiting it for some weeks daily, returned home perfectly cured. From the cliff the descent to the chapel is by fifty-two steps, which are said never to appear the same number in the ascent; which might very easily be traced to their broken character. The building itself is

old, about sixteen feet long by eleven wide, has three doors, and a primitive stone altar, under which the saint is said to be buried. The roof is rudely vaulted, and there is a small belfry, where, as tradition says, there was once a silver bell; and there is a legend attached, that some Danish or French pirates came by night, and having stolen the bell from its place, in carrying it down to their boat, rested it for a moment on a stone, which immediately opened and received it. This stone is still shown, and emits a metallic sound when struck by a stone or other hard substance. One of the doors out of the chapel leads by a flight of six steps to a recess in the rock, open at the top, on one side of which is the Wishing Corner, a fissure in the limestone rock, with indentations believed to resemble the marks which the ribs of a man forced into this nook would make, *if the rock were clay*. To this crevice many of the country people say our Saviour fled from the persecutions of the Jews. Others deem it more likely that St. Gawen, influenced by religious mortifications, squeezed himself daily into it, as a penance for his transgressions, until at length the print of the ribs became impressed on the rock. Here the pilgrim, standing upon a stone rendered smooth by the operation of the feet, is to turn round nine times and wish according to his fancy. If the saint be propitious, the wish will be duly gratified within a year, a month, and a day. Another marvellous quality of the fissure is, that it will receive the largest man, and be only just of sufficient size to receive the smallest. This may be accounted for by its peculiar shape.

ROBERT J. ALLEN.—(Vol. vi. p. 96.)

Bosherston, Pembroke..

In the western suburbs of the town of Leicester, by the side of the ancient *via vicinalis*, leading from the Roman *Ratæ* to the *Vosse Road*, and about seventy yards beyond the old Bow Bridge (so romantically associated with the closing scenes in the eventful life of Richard III.), rises a constant spring of beautifully limpid water, and known as St. Augustine's, or more commonly, St. Austin's Well. It derived its designation from its vicinity to the Augustine

monastery, situated immediately on the opposite side of the river Soar. The well is now covered and enclosed; but within the memory of persons still living it was in the state thus described by Nichols (*Hist. Leic.* vol. i. p. 300.) —

"The well is three quarters of a yard broad, and the same in length within its enclosure; the depth of its water from the lip, or back-edging on the earth, where it commonly overflows, is half a yard. It is covered with a millstone, and enclosed with brick on three sides; that towards the Bow Bridge and the town is open."

This well will come under the list of those mentioned by Mr. Rawlinson as "good for sore eyes," it having been formerly in great repute as a remedy in these cases; and even since the enclosure of the well, many applications for water from the pump erected in the adjoining ground have, I know, been made for the same purpose. Permit me to record, as an instance of the strange metamorphoses which proper names undergo in the oral traditions of the people, that on making some inquiries a few years ago of "the oldest inhabitant" of the neighbourhood, respecting *St. Augustine's* Well, he at first pleaded ignorance of it, but at length, suddenly enlightened, exclaimed "Oh! you mean *Tostings's* Well!"

In addition to this holy well, we have also another in the town called St. James's Well, but I am not aware that there is any legend connected with it, except that it had a hermitage adjoining it, or that any particular virtue was attributed to it: whilst in the county we have on Charnwood Forest the well giving its name to *Holy-Well-Haw*, and the spring on Bosworth Field, rendered famous by the tradition of Richard III. having drunk at it during the battle, and which is surmounted by an inscription to that effect from the pen of the learned Dr. Parr.

Leicestriensis.—(Vol. vi. p. 152.)

At Wavertree, near Liverpool, is a well bearing the following inscription: "Qui non dat quod habet, Dæmon infra videt, 1414." Tradition says at one period there was a cross above it, inscribed "Deus dedit, homo bibit;" and that all travellers gave alms on drinking, if they omitted to

do so, a devil who was chained at the bottom laughed. A monastic building stood near and the occupants received the contributions.

A well at Everton has the reputation of being haunted, a fratricide having been committed there; but on referring to Syer's Local History, one of the most absurd compositions ever published, the author, who repeats everything he could hear, merely says:

"The water from this well is procured by direct access to the liquid itself, through the medium of a few stone steps: it is free to the public, and seldom dry."

Certain it is, it does not at all add to the romance of wells: for being formerly in a lonely situation it was a haunt of pickpockets, and other disorderly characters. It is now built over, and in a few years the short subterranean passage leading to the well will be forgotten.

AYMOND.—(Vol. vi. p. 304.)

There is one of the "by-way" wells, about which MR. RAWLINSON inquires, near the little hamlet of Sawr, which is situated about six miles from Llandilo Fawr in Carmarthenshire. It is much resorted to for the cure of sore eyes.

So also is the spring known as "Holy Well," or Cefyn Bryn (a mountain which runs down the peninsula of Gower). This last is still supposed to be under the especial patronage of the Virgin Mary, and a crooked pin is the offering of every visitor to its sacred precincts. It is believed that if this pin be dropped in with fervent faith, all the many pins which have ever been thrown into it may be seen rising from the bottom to greet the new one. Argue the impossibility of the thing, and you are told that it is true it never happens *now*, such earnestness of faith being, "alas!" extinct. SELEUCUS.—(Vol. vi. p. 497.)

Prophetic Spring at Langley, Kent. — The following "note" upon a passage in *Warkworth's Chronicle* (pp. 23, 24.) may perhaps possess sufficient interest to warrant its insertion in your valuable little publication. The passage is curious, not only as showing the superstitious

dread with which a simple natural phenomenon was regarded by educated and intelligent men four centuries ago, but also as affording evidence of the accurate observation of a writer, whose labours have shed considerable light upon "one of the darkest periods in our annals." The chronicler is recording the occurrence, in the thirteenth year of Edward the Fourth, of a "gret hote somere," which caused much mortality, and "unyversalle fevers, axes, and the bloody flyx in dyverse places of Englonde," and also occasioned great dearth and famine "in the southe partyes of the worlde."

He then remarks that "dyverse tokenes have be schewede in Englonde this year for amendynge of mennys lyvynge," and proceeds to enumerate several springs or waters in various places, which only ran at intervals, and by their running always portended "derthe, pestylence, or grete batayle." After mentioning several of these, he adds —

"Also ther iş a pytte in Kent in Langley Parke; ayens any batayle he wille be drye, and it rayne neveyre so myche; and if ther be no batayle toward, he wille be fulle of watere, be it neveyre so drye a wethyre; and this yere he is drye."

Langley Park, situated in a parish of the same name, about four miles to the south-east of Maidstone, and once the residence of the Leybournes and other families, well-known in Kentish history, has long existed only in name, having been disparked prior to 1570; but the "pytte," or stream, whose wondrous qualities are so quaintly described by Warkworth, still flows at intervals. It is scarcely necessary to add, that it belongs to the class known as *intermitting springs*, the phenomena displayed by which are easily explained by the syphon-like construction of the natural reservoirs whence they are supplied.

I have never heard that any remnant of this curious superstition can now be traced in the neighbourhood, but persons long acquainted with the spot have told me that the state of the stream was formerly looked upon as a good index of the probable future price of corn. The same

causes which regulated the supply or deficiency of water, would doubtless also affect the fertility of the soil.

EDWARD R. J. HOWE. — (Vol. ii. p. 244.)

SUPERSTITIONS RESPECTING BEES.

Being at a neighbour's house about a month ago, the conversation turned upon the death of a mutual acquaintance a short time prior to my visit. A venerable old lady present asked, with great earnestness of manner, "Whether Mr. R.'s bees had been informed of his death?" (Our friend R. had been a great bee-keeper.) No one appeared to be able to answer the old lady's question satisfactorily, whereat she was much concerned, and said, "Well, if the bees were not told of Mr. R.'s death they would leave their hives, and never return. Some people give them a piece of the funeral cake; I don't think that is absolutely necessary, but certainly it is better to tell them of the death." Being shortly afterwards in the neighbourhood of my deceased friend's residence, I went a little out of my way to inquire after the bees. Upon walking up the garden I saw the industrious little colony at full work. I learned, upon inquiring of the housekeeper, that the bees had been properly informed of Mr. R.'s death.

I was struck with the singularity of this specimen of folk-lore, and followed up the subject with further inquiries amongst my acquaintance. I found that in my own family, upon the death of my mother, some five-and-twenty years ago, the bees were duly informed of the event. A lady friend also told me, that twenty years ago, when she was at school, the father of her school-mistress died, and on that occasion the bees were made acquainted with his death, and regaled with some of the funeral cake.

I wish to know whether this custom prevails in any other, and what part of England, and to what extent?

L. L. L. — (Vol. iv. p. 270.)

North Lincolnshire.

It is not wonderful that the remarkable instincts and in-

telligence of the honey-bee, its domesticity, and the strong affinity of its social habits to human institutions, should make it the object of many superstitious observances, and I think it probable that if enquiry be made of that class of people amongst whom such branches of folk-lore are most frequently found lingering, other prejudices respecting bees than those lately noticed by some of your correspondents might be discovered.

If the practice of making the bees acquainted with the mortuary events of the family ever prevailed in that part of Sussex from whence I write, I think it must be worn out, for I have not heard of it. But there is another superstition, also appertaining to mortality, which is very generally received, and which is probably only one of a series of such, and amongst which it is probable the practice before-mentioned might once be reckoned. Some years since the wife of a respectable cottager in my neighbourhood died in childbed. Calling on the widower soon after, I found that although deeply deploring a loss which left him several motherless children, he spoke calmly of the fatal termination of the poor woman's illness, as an inevitable and foregone conclusion. On being pressed for an explanation of these sentiments, I discovered that both he and his poor wife had been "warned" of the coming event by her going into the garden a fortnight before her confinement, and discovering that their bees, in the act of swarming, had made choice of a *dead hedge stake for their settling-place.* This is generally considered as an infallible sign of a death *in the family*, and in her situation it is no wonder that the poor woman should take the warning to herself; affording, too, another example of how a prediction may assist in working out its own fulfilment. "J. P. P."—(Vol. iv. p. 436.)

The superstition concerning the bees is common among the smaller farmers in the rural districts of Devon. I once knew an apprentice boy *sent back* from the funeral *cortége* by the nurse, to tell the bees of it, as it had been forgotten. They usually put some wine and honey for them before the

hives on that day. A man whose ideas have been confused frequently says his "head has been among the bees" (buzzing).

WILLIAM COLLYNS, M.R.C.S. — (Vol. v. p. 148.)
Kenton.

It is a subject for painful reflection, that beings of so great skill and useful industry should be so liable to take affront, as is proved by the anecdotes related of bees by L. L. L. Who would not grieve, that bees — who have been said to partake of the Divine nature,

> "Esse apibus partem divinæ mentis et haustus
> Ætherios dixêre" —

should reduce themselves, by this susceptibility of offence at (in most cases imaginary) neglect, to a level with the weakness and folly of human creatures, — I say human creatures; for in the country I have known feuds caused by omitting to bid to the funeral of a deceased neighbour, or to send black gloves. It was to be hoped that these "offensiones muliebres" (we may add "viriles" also) were peculiar to the human race; but that, it is apparent, is not so. The custom of giving a piece of the funeral cake is new to me; though it looks like want of feeling to be greedy of cake in the hour of affliction, yet there is a sort of retributive fitness in presenting to these busy people

> "*Melle* soporatam et medicatis frugibus offam."

It is a grateful acknowledgment of past favours conferred upon the deceased head of the family, and a retainer for future services to the survivors.

With regard to the custom of informing the bees of a death in the family, and the penalty of omitting to do so, I can add to the proof of it. I find among some memoranda I made more than five-and-twenty years ago, the following note:

"In Buckinghamshire it is common, on the death of any one of the family, for the nurse to go to all the bee-hives in the garden, and tap gently three times, each time repeating three times these words, 'Little brownie, little brownie, your master's dead;' when the bees

beginning to *hum*, show their consent to remain. The omission of this ceremony, it is believed, would occasion the loss of the bees by flight, or otherwise."

To show that a similar custom and belief, though varying in some particulars, are found upon the continent of Europe, I give the following extract:

"In Lithuania, when the master or mistress of the house dies, it is considered necessary to give notice of the fact to the bees, horses, and cows, by rattling a bunch of keys; and it is believed, that if this were omitted the bees and cattle would die."—See the *Journal of Agriculture. Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland*, Oct. 1848, p. 538.

One word more of bees: "His head is full of bees" is a Scotch proverb, said of a drunkard. (Ray's *Proverbs*, p. 198.) "He has a bee in his head" is an English proverb. So, "He has a bee in his bonnet." What is the meaning? As I was writing the last lines, I said to a friend, who was lounging in his arm-chair by our fire-side, "Why is a drunkard's head said to be full of bees?" "I don't know," he answered, "unless it is on account of their *humming*. You remember," he added,

> "With a pudding on Sundays, with stout *humming* liquor,
> And remnants of Latin to welcome the vicar."

F. W. T.

Oliver, in his account of Cherry-Burton (*History of Beverley*, p. 499.), speaks thus on the superstitious practice of informing bees, and putting them in mourning on the occasion of a death in the family:

"The inhabitants entertain a superstitious belief that when the head of a family dies, it is necessary to clothe the bees in mourning on the funeral day, to ensure the future prosperity of the hive."

He then refers to an instance, and says:

"A scarf of black crape was formerly applied to each bee-hive; and an offering of pounded funeral biscuit, soaked in wine, was placed at its entrance."

In a note, he accounts for the ceremony's origin by a quotation from Porph. *De Ant. Nymp.*, p. 261., in which

honey is spoken of as being "anciently a symbol of death." For other notices of superstitions in reference to bees, see Hone's *Mysteries*, pp 220. 222. 283. R. W. Elliot.

I was lately informed by a native of Monmouthshire, that the belief relative to bees is entertained in that and some of the adjacent counties even by educated persons. My informant gravely assured me that though the bees are aware of the approaching event, from the acuteness of their organs of smell, they require to be duly and timely communicated with on the subject, to induce them to remain with the survivors; but if this be neglected, they will desert their hives, and disappear. The propriety or necessity of offering them any refreshment was not stated. Yunap.

The custom still prevails in the Weald of Surrey and Sussex: probably through all the southern counties; but certainly in the Isle of Wight, where the writer only the other day, on noticing an empty apiary in the grounds of a villa, was told that the country people attributed its desertion to the bees not having had this formal notice of their master's death.

The same superstition is practised in some parts of France, when a mistress of the house dies; the formula being much like our English one, *i. e.* to tap thrice on the hive, repeating these words, "Petites abeilles, votre maîtresse est morte."

A. D.

Bees invited to Funerals.—At Bradfield, a primitive village on the edge of the moors, in the parish of Ecclesfield, I was informed by a person of much intelligence, that a custom has obtained in the district from time immemorial—"for hundreds of years" was the expression used—of inviting bees to funerals; and that an instance could be produced of the superstition having been practised even within the last year. What is done is this. When a death occurs, a person is appointed to call the neighbours to the funeral, who delivers the invitations in one form of words: "You are invited to the funeral of A. B., which is to take place at

such an hour, on such a day; and there will be dinner on table at — o'clock." And if it should happen that bees were kept in the garden of the house where the corpse lies (not an unlikely thing near moors), the messenger is instructed to address the same invitation to the bees in their hives; because it is considered that, if this compliment be omitted, the bees will die. ALFRED GATTY.

The ceremony of informing the bees of their owner's death is in full force in Ashborne, Derbyshire, Hinton, Wilts, and even in the highly intellectual city of Oxford. The ceremony is the same in all these places. Three taps are made on the hives with the house-key, while the informant repeats: "Bees, bees, bees, your master is dead, and you must work for ——," naming the future owner. A piece of black crape is then fastened to the hive. Many bee owners think it politic to inform the bees of the death of a relation: but in this case they never give the name, but the degree of relationship; as, "your master's brother, sister, aunt, &c. is dead." On weddings the bees always expect to be informed of the auspicious event, and to have their hive decorated with a wedding favour.

J. G. WOOD. — (Vol. iv. p. 308.)

Oxford.

It is a common saying in Hampshire that the bees are idle or unfortunate at their work, whenever there are wars: a very curious observer and fancier says, that this has been the case ever since the time of the movements in France, Prussia, and Hungary, up to the present time.

MACKENZIE WALCOTT, M. A. — (Vol. xii. p. 200.)

Selling Bees. — There is not one peasant I believe in this village, man or woman, who would sell you a swarm of bees. To be guilty of selling bees is a grievous omen indeed, than which nothing can be more dreadful. To barter bees is quite a different matter. If you want a hive, you may easily obtain it in lieu of a small pig, or some other equivalent. There may seem little difference in the eyes of enlightened persons between selling and bartering, but the

superstitious beekeeper sees a grand distinction, and it is not his fault if you don't see it too.

When a hive swarms, it is customary to take the shovel from the grate, and the key from the door, and to produce therewith a species of music which is supposed to captivate and soothe the winged tribe. If the bees do not settle on any neighbouring tree where they may have the full benefit of the inharmonious music, they are generally assailed with stones. This is a strange sort of proceeding, but it is orthodox, and there is nothing the villagers despise more than modern innovations of whatever kind.

EUSTACE W. JACOB. — (Vol. ix. p. 446.)

Stolen Bees. — Stolen bees will not thrive; they pine away and die. JANUS DOUSA.

Overyssel.

Bees at the Mote at Ightham. — At that fine specimen of old domestic architecture, "The Mote," at Ightham, in Kent, a hive of bees have for many years established themselves beneath the flooring of the ancient chapel. On the day of the death of the last proprietress of the Mote, they all disappeared, and, on the same afternoon on which the next occupant (the fair daughter of the devisee) arrived to take possession, the swarm returned to welcome her to her home, and fixed themselves at once in their old quarters. Last winter was, unhappily, too severe for them, and they all perished; but on the first sunny day in the spring, some of the family roaming among the beautiful deep-wooded dells which surrounded the Mote, observed a very large swarm of bees sweeping along the gorge, who never checked their flight till they reached the mansion, when they at once fixed themselves in the old quarters beneath the chapel floor, flying straight to the entrance-hole, as if well known and familiar to them. L. B. L.—(Vol. xii. p. 488.)

Adjuration to Bees. — The following curious piece, which is said to be copied from a St. Gall MS., may be interesting to apiarian readers. The Latinity is almost as wonderful as the substance of it:

"*Ad revocandum examen apum dispersum.*

"Adjuro te, mater aviorum, per Deum Regem cœlorum, et per illum Redemptorem Filium Dei te adjuro ut non te altum levare, nec longè volare: sed quàm plus citò potes ad arborem venire, ibi te allocas cùm omni tua genera, vel cum socia tua. Ibi habeo bono vaso parato, ubi vos ibi in Dei nomine laboretis, et nos in Dei nomine luminaria faciamus in Ecclesia Dei, et per virtutem Domini nostri Jesu-Christi, ut nos non offendat Dominus de radio solis, sicut vos offendit de egalo flos, in nomine sanctæ Trinitatis. Amen."—*Recueil des Historiens de la France*, ed. Bouquet, iv. 609.

J. C. R. — (Vol. x. p. 321.)

For superstitions respecting bees in South Northamptonshire, Essex, Cornwall, Surrey, Lincolnshire, and Norfolk, see pp. 15. 44. 51. 65. 90.

DEVIL'S MARK IN SWINE.

"We don't kill a pig every day," but we did a short time since; and after its hairs were scraped off, our attention was directed to six small rings, about the size of a pea, and in colour as if burnt or branded, on the inside of each fore leg, and disposed curvilinearly. Our labourer informed us with great gravity, and evidently believed it, that these marks were caused by the pressure of the devil's fingers, when he entered the herd of swine which immediately ran violently in the sea.—See Mark v. 11—15.; Luke viii. 22. 23. TEE BEE.—(Vol. vii. p. 281.)

CURES FOR THE HOOPING COUGH.

"I know," said one of my parishioners, "what would cure him, but m'appen you wouldn't believe me." "What is it, Mary?" I asked. "Why, I did every thing that every body teld me. One teld me to get him breathed on by a pie-bald horse. I took him ever such a way, to a horse at ——, and put him under the horse's mouth; but he was no better. Then I was teld to draw him backward through a bramble bush. I did so; but this didn't cure him. Last of all, I was teld to give him nine fried mice, fasting, in a

morning, in this way:—three the first morning; then wait three mornings, and then give him three more; wait three mornings, and then give him three more. When he had eaten these nine fried mice he became quite well. This would be sure to cure your child, Sir."

W. H. K.—(Vol. i. p. 397.)

Drayton Beauchamp.

In one of the principal towns of Yorkshire, half a century ago, it was the practice for persons in a respectable class of life to take their children, when afflicted with the hooping cough, to a neighbouring convent, where the priest allowed them to drink a small quantity of holy water out of a silver chalice, which the little sufferers were strictly forbidden to touch. By Protestant, as well as Roman Catholic parents, this was regarded as a remedy.

Eboracomb.—(Vol. iii. p. 220.)

There is a superstition in Cheshire that hooping cough is to be cured by holding a toad for a few moments with its head within the mouth of the person affected. I heard only the other day of a cure by this somewhat disagreeable process; the toad was said to have caught the disease, which in this instance proved fatal to it in a few hours.

A. H. H.—(Vol. iii. p. 258.)

It was said by the inhabitants of the Forest of Bere, East Hants, that new milk drank out of a cup made of the variegated holly is a cure for the hooping cough.

(Vol. iv. p. 227.)

In Cornwall, a slice of bread and butter or cake belonging to a married couple whose Christian names are John and Joan, if eaten by the sufferer under this disorder, is considered an efficacious remedy, though of course not always readily found. W. S. S.—(Vol. v. p. 148.)

I overheard a conversation the other day between some farmers: one was recommending the patient to inhale the breath of a horse as a certain cure; another gravely informed his audience that the sight of a piebald horse would afford immediate relief! G. A. C.—(Vol. v. p. 223.)

The following is said to prevail in the counties of Warwick, Worcester, and Stafford, as a remedy for this harrowing disorder in children: that if a child is put to walk beneath a common bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), having rooted in the ground at both extremities (which may be very commonly met with where they grow luxuriantly), a certain number of times, a perfect cure would be the result.

In the course of conversation with an old man in the county of Warwick, relative to ancient customs, he related to me as a fact within his own knowledge, that the pretty round stone shell, as he termed it (picking one up at the same time), a specimen of the *Gryphea incurva*, or Devil's Thumb, as it is frequently called, which is found in considerable quantities in the gravel beds of that county, when prepared in a certain manner—calcined, I believe—is a certain specific for this complaint in its most obstinate form. Indeed, he related to me some very extraordinary cures which he had himself witnessed.

A certain number of hairs taken from the black cross on the shoulders of a donkey, and put into a small bag made of black silk, and worn round a child's neck afflicted with the complaint, is a never-failing remedy.

Drinking-cups made from the wood of the common ivy, and used by children affected with this complaint, for taking therefrom all they require to drink, is current in the county of Salop as an infallible remedy; and I once knew an old gentleman (now no more) who, being fond of turning as an amusement, was accustomed to supply his neighbours with them, and whose brother always supplied him with the wood, cut from his own plantations. It is necessary in order to be effective, that the ivy from which the cups are made should be cut at some particular change of the moon, or hour of the night, &c., which I am now unable to ascertain: but perhaps some of your readers could give you the exact period. J. B. Whitborne.—(Vol. vii. pp. 104. 128.)

Inquiring the other day of a labourer as to the state of his child, who was suffering very severely from hooping

cough, he told me that she was "no better, although he had carried her, fasting, on Sunday morning, into *three parishes*," which, according to popular belief, was to be of great service to her. Another charm, for the cure of a sore mouth, in this neighbourhood, is to read the eighth psalm seven times for three sucessive mornings over the patient.

J. W. WALROND.—(Vol. ix. p. 239.)

Bradfield, Collumpton, Devon.

MEDICAL USE OF PIGEONS.

"Spirante columba
Suppositu pedibus, revocantur ad ima vapores."

"'They apply pigeons to draw the vapours from the head.'"—Dr. Donne's "Devotions upon Emergent Occasions," *Works*, vol. iii. p. 553. Lond. 1839.

Mr. Alfred appends to the above-cited passage the following note:

"After a careful search in Pliny, Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and Sir Thomas Browne's *Vulgar Errors*, I can find no mention of this strange remedy."

I am inclined to suspect that the application of pigeons was by no means an uncommon remedy in cases particularly of fever and delirium. To quote one passage from Evelyn:

"Neither the cupping nor the *pidgeons*, those last of remedyes, wrought any effect."—*Life of Mrs. Godolphin*, p. 148. Lond. 1847.

Some of your correspondents may possibly be able to furnish additional information respecting this custom; for I am confident of having seen it alluded to, though at the moment I cannot remember by whom.

RT.—(Vol. iv. p. 228.)

Warmington.

In my copy of Mr. Alford's very unsatisfactory edition of Donne, I find noted (in addition to R.T.'s quotation from *The Life of Mrs. Godolphin*) references to Pepys's *Diary*, October 19, 1663, and January 21, 1667-8, and the following from Jer. Taylor, ed. Heber, vol. xii. p. 290.: "We

cut living pigeons in halves, and apply them to the feet of men in fevers." J. C. R.—(Vol. iv. p. 291.)

PIXIES OR PISKIES.

At Chudleigh Rocks I was told, a few weeks ago, by the old man who acts as guide to the caves, of a recent instance of a man's being pixy-led. In going home, full of strong drink, across the hill above the cavern called the "Pixies' Hole," on a moonlit night, he heard sweet music, and was led into the whirling dance by the "good folk," who kept on spinning him without mercy, till he fell down "in a swoon."

On "coming to himself," he got up and found his way home, where he "took to his bed, and never left it again, but died a little while after," the victim (I suppose) of *delirium tremens*, or some such disorder, the incipient symptoms of which his haunted fancy turned into the sweet music in the night wind and the fairy revel on the heath. In the tale I have above given he persisted (said the old man) when the medical attendant who was called in inquired of him the symptoms of his illness. This occurrence happened, I understood, very recently, and was told to me in perfect good faith.

I have just been told of a man who several years ago lost his way on Whitchurch Down, near Tavistock. The farther he went the farther he had to go; but happily calling to mind the antidote "in such case made and provided," he turned his coat inside out, after which he had no difficulty in finding his way. "He was supposed," adds my informant, "to be pisky-led."

About ten miles from Launceston, on the Bodmin road (or at least in that direction) is a large piece of water called Dosmere (pronounced Dosmery) Pool. A tradition of the neighbourhood says that on the shores of this lonely mere the ghosts of bad men are ever employed in binding the sand "in bundles with *beams* of the same" (a local word meaning *bands*, in Devonshire called *beans*; as *hay-beans*,

and in this neighbourhood hay-*beams*, for hay-bands). These ghosts, or some of them, were driven out (they say "*horse-whipped* out," at any rate exorcised in some sort) "by the parson" from Launceston. H. G. T.—(Vol. ii. p. 511.)

Launceston.

An old woman, the wife of a respectable farmer at a place called "Colmans," in the parish of Werrington, near Launceston, has frequently told my informant of a "piskey" (for *so*, and not *pixy*, the creature is called *here*, as well as as in parts of Devon) which frequently *made its appearance* in the form of a small child in the kitchen of the farm-house, where the inmates were accustomed to set a little stool for it. It would do a good deal of household work, but if the hearth and the chimney corner were not kept neatly swept, it would pinch the maid. The piskey would often come into the kitchen and sit on its little stool before the fire, so that the old lady had many opportunities of seeing it. Indeed it was a familiar guest in the house for many months. At last it left the family under these circumstances. One evening it was sitting on the stool as usual, when it suddenly started, looked up and said,—

"Piskey fine, and Piskey gay,
Now, Piskey! run away!"

and vanished; after which it never appeared again. This distich is the first utterance of a piskey I have heard.

It is worth notice that the people here seem to entertain no doubt as to the identity of piskies and fairies. Indeed I am told, that the old woman before mentioned called her guest indifferently "piskey" or "fairy."

The country people in this neighbourhood sometimes put a prayer-book under a child's pillow as a charm to keep away the piskies. I am told that a poor woman near Launceston was fully persuaded that one of her children was taken away and a pisky substituted, the disaster being caused by the absence of the prayer-book on one particular night. This story reminds me of the "killcrop."

H. G. T.—(Vol. ii. p. 475.)

In reference to your correspondent H. G. T.'s article on Pixies, allow me to say that I have read the distich which he quotes in a tale to the following effect:

In one of the southern counties of England — (all the pixey tales which I have heard or read have their seat laid in the south of England)—there lived a lass who was courted and wed by a man who, after marriage, turned out to be a drunkard, neglecting his work, which was that of threshing, thereby causing his pretty wife to starve. But after she could bear this no longer, she dressed herself in her husband's clothes (whilst he slept off the effects of his drunkenness), and went to the barn to do her husband's work. On the morning of the second day, when she went to the barn, she found a large pile of corn thrashed, which she had not done; and so she found, for three or four days, her pile of corn doubled. One night she determined to watch and see who did it, and carrying her intention into practice, she saw a little pixey come into the barn to a tiny flail, with which he set to work so vigorously that he soon thrashed a large quantity. During his work he sang,

"Little Pixey, fair and slim,
Without a rag to cover him."

The next day the good woman made a complete suit of miniature clothes, and hung them up behind the barn door, and watched to see what *pixey* would do. I forgot to mention that he hung his flail behind the door when he had done with it.

At the usual time the pixey came to work, went to the door to take down his flail, and saw the suit of clothes, took them down, and put them on him, and surveyed himself with a satisfied air, and sang

"Pixey fine, and pixey gay,
Pixey now must fly away."

It then flew away, and she never saw it more.

In this tale the word was invariably spelt "pixey."

TYSIL.

Pixies.—The *puckie*-stone is a rock above the Teign, near

Chagford. In the *Athenæum* I mentioned the rags in which the pixies generally appear. In *A Narrative of some strange Events that took place in Island Magee and Neighbourhood in* 1711, is this description of a spirit that troubled the house of Mr. James Hattridge:

"About the 11th of December, 1710, when the aforesaid Mrs. Hattridge was sitting at the kitchen-fire, in the evening, before daylight going, a little boy (as she and the servants supposed) came in and sat down beside her, having an old black bonnet on his head, with short black hair, a half-worn blanket about him, trailing on the ground behind him, and a *torn* black vest under it. He seemed to be about ten or twelve years old, but he still covered his face, holding his arm with a piece of the blanket before it. She desired to see his face, but he took no notice of her. Then she asked him several questions; viz. if he was cold or hungry? If he would have any meat? Where he came from, and where he was going? To which he made no answer, but getting up, danced very nimbly, leaping higher than usual, and then ran out of the house as far as the end of the garden, and sometimes into the cowhouse, the servants running after him to see where he would go, but soon lost sight of him; but when they returned he would be close after them in the house, which he did above a dozen of times. At last the little girl, seeing her master's dog coming in, said, 'Now my master is coming he will take a course with this troublesome creature,' upon which he immediately went away, and troubled them no more till the month of February, 1711."

This costume is appropriate enough for an Irish spirit; but there may possibly be some connexion with the ragged clothes of the Pixies. (Comp. "Tateman," *Deutsche Mythol.*, p. 470.; and Canciani's note "De Simulachris de Pannis factis," *Leges Barbar.*, iii. p. 168.; *Indic. Superst.*) The common story of Brownie and his clothes is, I suppose, connected.

In some parts of Devonshire the pixies are called "derricks." In Cornwall it is believed that wherever the pixies are fond of resorting, the depths of the earth are rich in metal. Very many mines have been discovered by their singing. R. J. K.—(Vol. ii. p. 514.)

THE POOL OF THE BLACK HOUND.

In the parish of Dean Prior is a narrow wooded valley, watered by a streamlet, that in two or three places falls into cascades of considerable beauty. At the foot of one of these is a deep hollow called the Hound's Pool. Its story is as follows.

There once lived in the hamlet of Dean Combe a weaver of great fame and skill. After long prosperity he died, and was buried. But the next day he appeared sitting at the loom in his chamber, working diligently as when he was alive. His sons applied to the parson, who went accordingly to the foot of the stairs, and heard the noise of the weaver's shuttle in the room above. "Knowles!" he said, "come down; this is no place for thee." "I will," said the weaver, "as soon as I have worked out my quill," (the "quill" is the shuttle full of wool). "Nay," said the vicar, "thou hast been long enough at thy work; come down at once!" So when the spirit came down, the vicar took a handful of earth from the churchyard, and threw it in its face. And in a moment it became a black hound. "Follow me," said the vicar; and it followed him to the gate of the wood. And when they came there, it seemed as if all the trees in the wood were "coming together," so great was the wind. Then the vicar took a nutshell with a hole in it, and led the hound to the pool below the waterfall. "Take this shell," he said; "and when thou shalt have dipped out the pool with it, thou mayst rest—not before." And at midday, or at midnight, the hound may still be seen at its work.

R. J. K.—(Vol. ii. p. 515.)

SNAKES NEVER DIE TILL SUNSET.

Several years ago, in returning from an excursion from Clevedon, in Somerset, to Cadbury Camp, I saw a viper on the down, which I pointed out to the old woman in charge of the donkeys, who assailed it with a stout stick, and

nearly killed it. I expressed surprise at her leaving it with some remains of life; but she said that, whatever she did to it, it would "live till sundown, and as soon as the sun was set it would die." The same superstition prevails in Cornwall and Northamptonshire, and also in Devon. H. G. T.—(Vol. ii. p. 510.)

SNAKE CHARMING.

Two or three summers ago, I was told a curious story of snake charming by a lady of undoubted veracity, in whose neighbourhood (about a dozen miles from Totnes) the occurrence had taken place. Two coast-guard men in crossing a field fell in with a snake: one of them, an *Irishman*, threw his jacket over the animal, and immediately uttered or muttered a charm over it. On taking up the garment, after a few seconds had passed, the *snake was dead.*

When I heard this story, and understood that the operator was an Irishman, I bethought me of how Rosalind says, "I was never so be-rhymed since Pythagoras' time, that I was an Irish rat," and accounted satisfactorily for the fact that, "as touching snakes, there are no snakes in *Ireland*;" for, as the song voucheth, "the snakes committed suicide to save themselves from slaughter," *i. e.* they *were charmed to death by St Patrick.*

I fear it would now be impossible to recover the charm made use of by the coast-guard man; but I will have inquiry made, and if I can obtain any further particulars, I will forward them to you. J. M. B.—(Vol. ii. p. 510.)

SWANS HATCHED DURING THUNDER.

The fable of the singing of swans at death is well known; but I recently heard a bit of "folk lore" as to the birth of swans quite as poetical, and probably equally true. It is this: that swans are always hatched during a thunder-storm. I was told this by an old man in Hampshire, who

had been connected with the care of swans all his life. He, however, knew nothing about their singing at death.

Is this opinion as to the birth of swans common? If so, probably some of your correspondents will detail the form in which such belief is expressed.

ROBERT RAWLINSON.—(Vol. ii. p. 510.)

MEDICAL USE OF MICE.

I have often heard my father say, that when he had the measles, his nurse gave him a roasted mouse to cure him.

SCOTUS.—(Vol. i. p. 430.)

Roasting Mice for Hooping-cough is very common in Norfolk; but I am sorry to say that a more cruel superstitious practice is sometimes inflicted on the little animal; for it is not many years since I accidentally entered the kitchen in time to save a poor little mouse from being hung up by the tail and roasted alive, as the means of expelling the others of its race from the house. I trust that this barbarous practice will soon be forgotten.

R. G. P. M.—(Vol. ii. p. 197.)

An old woman lately recommended an occasional roast mouse as a certain cure for a little boy who wetted his bed at night. Her own son, she said, had got over this weakness by eating three roast mice. I am told that the Faculty employ this remedy, and that it has been prescribed in the Oxford Infirmary.

J. W. H.—(Vol. ii. p. 435.)

The remedy of the roast mouse recommended in *The Pathway to Health* (which I find is in the British Museum), is also prescribed in *Most Excellent and Approved Remedies*, 1652:—"Make it in powder," says the author, "and drink it off at one draught, and it will presently help you, especially if you use it three mornings together." The following is "an excellent remedy to stanch bleeding:"—

"Take a toad and dry him very well in the sun, then put him in a linen bag, and hang him with a string about the neck of the

party that bleedeth, and let it hang so low that it may touch the breast on the left side near unto the heart; and this will certainly stay all manner of bleeding at the mouth, nose," &c.

Sage leaves, yarrow, and ale, are recommended for a "gnawing at the heart;" which I think should be "made a note of" for the benefit of poor poets and disappointed authors. WEDGECNARF.—(Vol. ii. p. 510.)

I was stopping about three years ago in the house of a gentleman whose cook had been in the service of a quondam Canon of Ch. Ch., who averred that she roasted mice to cure her master's children of the hooping-cough. She said it had the effect of so doing.

CHAS. PASLAM.—(Vol. ii. p. 510.)

Seeing some Queries and Replies on this subject, I am induced to send you a few extracts from an old book in my possession (marked "very scarce"), published in 1661. Its title is *Panzoologicomineralogia, or a Compleat History of Animals and Minerals.* By Richard Lovell, St. C. C. Oxon. It treats chiefly of the medicinal uses of the various objects. I am tempted to tell you the use of a "unicorne," but confine myself to the mouse.

"The flesh eaten causeth oblivion, and corrupteth the meat; yet those of Chalecut eat them; it is hot, soft, and fattish, and expelleth melancholy. . . . A mouse dissected and applied, draweth out reeds, darts, and other things that stick in the flesh. . . . Mice bruised, and reduced to the consistence of an *acopon* (what's that?), with old wine, cause hair on the eyebrows. . . . . Being eaten by children when rosted, they dry up the spittle. The magicians eat them twice a month against the paines of the teeth. The water in which they have been boiled helps against the quinsey. Being boiled and eaten, they help children's pissing in bed. The fresh blood kills warts. The ashes of the skinne, applied with vinegar, help the paines of the head. The head worn in a cloth, helps the epilepsy. The braine being steeped in wine, and applied to the forehead, helpeth the headach. Used with water, it cureth the phrensy. The heart, *taken out of a mouse* WHEN ALIVE, worne about the arms of a woman, causeth no conception. The fillet of the liver, drunk with austere wine, helpeth quartans. The liver, rosted in the new of the moon, trieth the epilepsy. The dung is corrosive. Given in any liquor, it helpeth the collicke. It looseneth the body: therefore some nurses use it for

children in suppositories (?). It helpeth hollow teeth, being put therein."

There is more of the sort, to the extent of 2¾ closely printed pages. It should be added that the author quotes authorities, old and new, for the several facts he adduces. Pliny is a great authority with him, and Galen is often cited.

J. K.—(Vol. iv. p. 52.)

SACRAMENTAL WINE.

In a remote hamlet of Surrey I recently heard the following superstition. In a very sickly family, of which the children were troubled with bad fits, and the poor mother herself is almost half-witted, an infant newly born seemed to be in a very weakly and unnatural state. One of the gossips from the neighbouring cottages coming in, with a mysterious look said, "Sure, the babby wanted *something*,—a drop of the sacrament wine would do it good." On surprise being expressed at such a notion, she added, "Oh! they often gives it." I do not find any allusion in Brand's *Antiquities* to such popular credence. He mentions the superstition in Berkshire, that a ring made from a piece of silver collected at the communion (especially that on Easter Sunday) is a cure for convulsions and fits.

ALBERT WAY. — (Vol. iii. p. 179.)

From a note by MR. ALBERT WAY, on the use of sacramental wine, one would be led to infer that it was recommended on account of some superstitious belief in its superior excellency from having been used in religious worship; but I would suggest that the same reasons which recommend Tent wine, the kind generally used for the Sacrament, are those which have established for it a reputation in cases of sickness: these are its rich red colour, and sweet and agreeable flavour.

Weakness is popularly supposed to be caused by a thinness and want of blood; if wine be recommended for this, there is a deeply rooted prejudice in favour of red wine because the blood is red, and upon no better principle than

that which prescribes the yellow bark of the barberry for the yellow state of jaundice; the nettle, for the nettle-rash; and the navel-wort (*Cotyledon umbilicus*), for weakness about the umbilical region. The truth is, that rustic practice is much influenced by the doctrine of similitudes, the principle of "*similia similibus curantur*" having been more extensively recognised in the olden time than since the days of Hahnemann.

The sweetness of Tent wine would recommend it for children, to whom a stronger wine is generally distasteful; but Port is generally prescribed as a tonic for adults.

It may further be remarked, that the recommendation to give Sacramental wine might arise from the fact, that, as in some parishes more wine is provided than is required, the remainder is put by to be given to the poor who may require it at the hands of the clergyman.

JAMES BUCKMAN. — (Vol. iii. p. 320.)

Cirencester.

This idea is a relic of Roman Catholic times. In Ireland a weakly child is frequently brought to the altar rails, and the priest officiating at mass requested to allow it to drink from the chalice of what is termed *the ablution*, that is, the wine and water with which the chalice is *rinced* after the priest has taken the communion, and which ablution ordinarily is taken by the priest. *Here* the efficacy is ascribed to the cup having just before contained the blood of Our Lord. I have heard it seriously recommended in a case of hooping-cough. Your correspondent MR. BUCKMAN does not give sufficient credit for common sense to the believers in some portion of folk lore. Red wine is considered tonic, and justly, as it contains a greater proportion of *turmic* than white. The yellow bark of the barberry contains an essential tonic ingredient, as the Jesuit's bark does *quinine*, or that of the willow *salicine*. Nettle juice is well known as a purifier of the blood; and the navel-wort, like Euphrosia, which is properly called *Eye-bright*, is as likely to have had its name from its proved efficacy as a simple, as from any *fancied* likeness to the region affected. The old monks

were shrewd herbalists. They were generally the physicians of their neighbourhood, and the names and uses of the simples used by them survive the ruin of the monasteries and the expulsion of their tenants.

KERRIENSIS. — (Vol. iii. p. 368.)

OBEISM.

Can any of your readers give me some information about *Obeism?* I am anxious to know whether it is in itself a religion, or merely a rite practised in some religion in Africa, and imported thence to the West Indies (where, I am told, it is rapidly gaining ground again): and whether the *obeist* obtains the immense power he is said to possess over his brother negroes by any acquired art, or simply by working upon the more superstitious minds of his companions. Any information, however, on the subject will be acceptable.

T. H.

In the early part of this century, Obeism was very common among the slave-population in the West Indies, especially on the remoter estates — of course of African origin — not as either a "religion" or a "rite," but rather as a superstition; a power claimed by its professors, and assented to by the *patients*, of causing good or evil to, or averting it from them; which was of course always for a "consideration" of some sort, to the profit, whether honorary, pecuniary, or other, of the dispenser. It is by the pretended influence of certain spells, charms, ceremonies, amulets worn, or other such incantations, as practised with more or less diversity by the adepts, the magicians and conjurers, the "false prophets" of all ages and countries.

On this matter, a curious phenomenon to investigate would be, the process by which the untonsured neophyte is converted into the bonneted doctor; the progress and stages of his mind in the different phases of the practice; how he begins by deceiving himself, to end in deceiving others; the first uninquiring ignorance; the gradual admission of ideas, what he is taught or left to imagine; the

faith, or, what is fancied to be so, the mechanical belief; then the confusion of thought from the intrusion of doubt and uncertainty; the adoption of some undefined notions; and, finally, actual unbelief; followed by designed and systematic injustice in the practice of what first was taken up in sincerity, though even this now perhaps is not unmixed with some fancy of its reality. For this must be the gradation more or less gone through in all such things, whether Obeism, Fetichism, the Evil Eye, or any sort of sorcery or witchcraft, in whatever variousness of form practised; cheats on the one hand, and dupes on the other: the *primum mobile* in every case being some shape or other of *gain* to the practitioner.

It seems, however, hardly likely that Obeism should now be "rapidly gaining ground again" there, from the greater spread of Christianity and diffusion of enlightenment and information in general since the slave-emancipation; as also from the absence of its feeding that formerly accompanied every fresh importation from the coast: as, like mists before the mounting sun, all such impostures must fade away before common sense, truth, and facts, whenever these are allowed their free influence.

The conclusion, then, would rather be, that Obeism is on the decline; only more apparent, when now seen, than formerly, from its attracting greater notice. M.

I was for a short time in the island of Jamaica, and from what I could learn there of Obeahism, the power seemed to be obtained by the Obeah-man or woman, by working upon the fears of their fellow-negroes, who are notoriously superstitious. The principal charm seemed to be, a collection of feathers, coffin furniture, and one or two other things which I have forgotten. A small bundle of this, hung over the victim's door, or placed in his path, is supposed to have the power of bringing ill luck to the unfortunate individual. And if any accident, or loss, or sickness should happen to him about the time, it is immediately imputed to the dreaded influence of Obeah! But I have heard of cases where the unfortunate victim has gradually wasted away, and died

under this powerful spell, which, I have been informed by old residents in the island, is to be attributed to a more natural cause, namely, the influence of poison. The Obeahman causes a quantity of *ground glass* to be mixed with the food of the person who has incurred his displeasure; and the result is said to be a slow but sure and wasting death! Perhaps some of your medical readers can say whether an infusion of *powdered glass* would have this effect. I merely relate what I have been told by others.

D. P. W. — (Vol. iii. p. 149.)

T. H. will find, in the authorities given below, that Obeahism is not only a rite, but a religion, or rather superstition, viz. *Serpent-worship*. *Modern Universal History*, fol. vol. vi. p. 600.; 8vo. vol. xvi. p. 411.: which is indebted for its information to the works of De Marchais, Barbot, Atkyns, and Bosman: the last of which may be seen in Pinkerton's *Collection*, vol. xvi. and a review of it in *Acta Eruditor.*, Lips. 1705, p. 265., under the form of an "Essay on Guinea." In Astley's *Collection of Voyages*, there is an account compiled from every authority then known, and a very interesting description of the rites and ceremonies connected with this superstition. According to the same authors, the influence of the Obeist does not depend on the exercise of any art or natural magic, but on the apprehensions of evil infused into his victim's mind. See also Lewis's *Journal of a Residence among the Negroes in the West Indies*.

The name of the sacred serpent, which in the ancient language of Canaan was variously pronounced, was derived from "ob" (inflare), perhaps from his peculiarity of inflation when irritated. See Bryant's *Analysis*, vol. i.; Deane's *Worship of the Serpent*, p. 80. From a notion of the mysterious inflation produced by the presence of the divine spirit, those who had the spirit of Ob, or Python, received the names of Ob, or Pythia; according to the not unusual custom for the priest or priestess of any god to take the name of the deity they served. See Selden *De Diis Syris*, Synt. 1. c. 2. It is a curious coincidence, that as the

Witch of Endor is called "Oub," and the African sorceress "Obi," from the serpent-deity *Oub*, so the old English name of a witch, "hag," bears apparent relationship to the word *hak*, the ancient British name of a species of snake. In Yorkshire, according to Stukeley, they call snakes "hags" and "hag-worms," (Abury, p. 32.).

In the Breton language, *Belech* is "Priest," and may similarly indicate a priest of Bel-the-Dragon.

From the Hebrew *Ob*, the Greek ὄφις was probably derived; for the same word, in Hebrew, Arabic, and Greek, which denotes "divination," denotes a "serpent." "Nachash,"* "ilahat,"† "ὀιωνίζεσθαι,"‡ have the same double signification as if the serpent were recognised as the grand inspirer of the heathen prophets. See Faber's *Horæ Mosaicæ*, vol. i. p. 98.

The word "Ob" was translated by the LXX. ἐγγαστρίμυθος, "a ventriloquist," in accommodation to the received opinions respecting the Pythian priestess. See the Notes to Creech's *Lucretius*, book v.; Jones's (of Nayland) *Physiolog. Disquis.* p. 290. The deception practised by the Witch of Endor, and by the damsel mentioned in Acts xvi. 16., was of this description. See Wierus de *Præstig. Dæmon.* p. 203.; and Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, p. 148.

The serpent, which with heathen mythologists had various acceptations (see Vossius, *Theologia Gent. et Physiologia Christ.*), was also understood as a natural symbol or hieroglyphic of the air. T. J.—(Vol. iii. p. 309.)

Obeism is not in itself a religion, except in the sense in which Burke says that "superstition is the religion of feeble minds." It is a belief, real or pretended, in the efficacy of certain spells and incantations, and is to the uneducated negro what sorcery was to our unenlightened forefathers.

* See Parkhurst.

† Dickenson's *Delphi Phœnic.*, p. 10.

‡ Stillingfleet's *Orig. Sacræ*, book iii. c. iii. s. 18.

This superstition is known in St. Lucia by the name of *Kembois*. It is still extensively practised in the West Indies, but there is no reason to suppose that it is rapidly gaining ground. F. H. will find ample information on the subject in Père Labat's *Nouveau Voyage aux Isles françaises de l'Amérique*, tome ii. p. 59., and tome iv. pp. 447. 499. and 506., edition of 1742; in Bryan Edwards' *History of the West Indies*, vol. ii. ch. iii., 5th edition (London, 1819); and in Dr. R. R. Madden's *Residence in the West Indies*, vol. ii. letter 27. Perhaps the following particulars from Bryan Edwards (who says he is indebted for them to a Mr. Long) on the etymology of *obeah*, may be acceptable to some of your readers:

"The term *obeah*, *obiah*, or *obia*, (for it is variously written,) we conceive to be the adjective, and *obe* or *obi*, the noun substantive; and that by the word *obia* — men or women — is meant those who practise *obi*. The origin of the term we should consider as of no importance, in our answer to the question proposed, if, in search of it, we were not led to disquisitions that are highly gratifying to curiosity. From the learned Mr. Bryant's commentary upon the word *oph*, we obtain a very probable etymology of the term. 'A serpent, in the Egyptian language, was called *ob* or *aub*.' '*Obion* is still the Egyptian name for a serpent.' Moses, in the name of God, forbids the Israelites ever to inquire of the demon *Ob*, which is translated in our Bible, charmer or wizard, 'divinator aut sorcilegus.' 'The woman at Endor is called *oub* or *ob*, translated Pythonissa; and *oubaois* (he cites from *Horus Apollo*) was the name of the Basilisk, or Royal Serpent, emblem of the sun, and an ancient oracular deity of Africa.'"

One of your correspondents has formed a substantive from *obe* by the addition of *ism*, and another from *obeah* by the same process; but it will be seen by the above quotation that there is no necessity for that obtrusive termination, the superstitious practice in question being already sufficiently described by the word *obe* or *obi*.

HENRY H. BREEN.—(Vol. iii. p. 376.)

St. Lucia.

In the *Medical Times* of 30th Sept. there is a case of a woman who fancied herself under its influence, in which the

name (in a note) is derived from Obi, the town, district, or province in Africa where it was first practised; and there is appended the following description of one of the superstitions as given by a witness on a trial:

"Do you know the prisoner to be an Obeah man?—Ees, massa; shadow catcher true.

"What do you mean by shadow catcher?—Him hab coffin [a little coffin was here produced]; him set to catch dem shadow.

"What shadow do you mean?—When him set Obeah for somebody him catch dem shadow, and dem go dead."

The derivation of the name from a place is very different from the supposition so cleverly argued connecting it with Ob; but I cannot find in any gazetteer to which I at present have had access, any place in Africa of the name, or a similar name. I do not remember in the various descriptions I have read of the charms practised, that one of catching the shadow mentioned. E. N. W.—(Vol. iv. p. 228.)

THREE MAIDS.

There is a spot on the road from Winchester to Andover called the "Three Maids." They are, I believe, nameless. Tradition says that they poisoned their father, and were for that crime buried alive up to their necks. Travellers passing by were ordered not to feed them; but one compassionate horseman as he rode along threw the core of an apple to one, on which she subsisted for three days. Wonderful is it to state that three groups of firs sprung up miraculously from the graves of the three maids. Thus their memories have been perpetuated. The peasantry of Winchester and its neighbourhood for the most part accredit the story, and I see no reason for disbelieving the first part of it myself. Does any one know of a like punishment being awarded in olden times, when the tender mercies of the law were cruel and arbitrary?

EUSTACE W. JACOB.—(Vol. ix. p. 299.)

MOTHER RUSSEL'S POST.

On the road to Kings Sombourn, of educational renown, there is a spot where four roads meet. Report says that a certain Mother Russel, who committed suicide, was buried there. A little girl in this village was afraid to pass the spot at night on account of the ghosts, which are supposed to haunt it in the hours of darkness. The rightful name of the place is "Mother Russel's Post."

EUSTACE W. JACOB.—(Vol. ix. p. 299.)

SUBTERRANEAN BELLS.

Hone, in his *Year-Book*, gives a letter from a correspondent in relation to a tradition in Raleigh, Nottinghamshire, which states that, many centuries since, the church and a whole village were swallowed up by an earthquake. Many villages and towns have certainly shared a similar fate, and we have never heard of them more.

> "The times have been
> That when the brains were out the man would die,
> And there an end."

But at Raleigh, they say, the old church-bells still ring at Christmas time, deep, deep in earth; and that it was a Christmas-morning custom for the people to go out into the valley, and put their ears to the ground to listen to the mysterious chimes of the subterranean temple. Is this a tradition peculiar to this locality? I fancy not, and seem to have a faint remembrance of a similar belief in other parts.

J. J. S.—(Vol. vii. p. 128.)

The tower and nave of Tunstall Church, Norfolk, are in ruins; the chancel alone being used for divine service. The village tradition says, that this calamity was caused by fire; and that the parson and churchwardens quarrelled for the possession of the bells which were uninjured. During their altercation, the arch-fiend walked off with the subjects of dispute; but being pursued, and overtaken by the parson — who began to exorcise in Latin —

he made a way through the earth to his appointed dwelling-place, taking them with him. The spot where this took place is now a boggy pool of water, called Hell Hole; and an adjoining clump of alder-trees is called Hell Carr. In summer time, a succession of bubbles—doubtless caused by marsh gas—keep constantly appearing on the surface. Those who believe in the tradition, find in this circumstance a strong confirmation. For, as it is the entrance to the bottomless pit, the bells must be descending still; and the bubbles would necessarily be caused by bells sinking in water.

In the adjoining village of Halvergate, on the largest bell, is the following inscription:

"Sit cunctis annis,
Nobis *avita Johã*."

I suppose this must be "audita Johannes," but the inscription certainly is *avita*.

On the second bell:

"Intercede pia
Pro nobis Virgo Maria."

On the third bell, founder's name, and date 1653,—a solitary instance, I imagine, of an addition made to a peal of bells during the Puritan triumph of the Great Rebellion.

E. G. R.—(Vol. vii. p. 200.)

Fisherty Brow, near Kirkby Lonsdale, supplies such an instance as J. J. S. inquires after. There is a sort of natural hollow scooped out there, where a church, parson, and all the people, were swallowed up ages since; and any one who doubts it, may put his ear to the ground on a Sunday morning and hear the bells ring!

P. P.—(Vol. vii. p. 200.)

At Crosmere, near Ellesmere, Shropshire, where there is one of a number of pretty lakes scattered throughout that district, there is a tradition of a chapel having formerly stood on the banks of the lake. And it is said that the belief once was, that whenever the waters were ruffled by wind,

the chapel bells might be heard as ringing beneath the surface. This, though bearing on the subject of "submarine" or "subaqueous," rather than "subterranean" bells, illustrates, I think, the tradition to which J. J. S. refers.

J. W. M.—(Vol. vii. p. 328.)

Hordley, Ellesmere.

In a most interesting paper by the Rev. W. Thornber, A.B., Blackpool, published in the *Proceedings of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 1851-2, there is mention of a similar tradition to that quoted by J. J. S.

Speaking of the cemetery of Kilgrimol, two miles on the south shore from Blackpool, the learned gentleman says:

"The ditch and cross have disappeared, either obliterated by the sand, or overwhelmed by the inroads of the sea; but, with tradition, the locality is a favourite still. The *superstitio loci* marks the site: 'The church,' it says, 'was swallowed up by an earthquake, together with the Jean la Cairne of Stonyhill; but on Christmas Eve every one, since that time, on bending his ear to the ground, may distinguish clearly its bells pealing most merrily.'"

BROCTUNA.—(Vol. vii. p. 391.)

Bury.

In a little brochure entitled *Christmas, its History and Antiquity*, published by Slater, London, 1850, the writer says that—

"In Berkshire it is confidently asserted, that if any one watches on Christmas Eve he will hear *subterranean bells;* and in the mining districts the workmen declare that at this sacred season high mass is performed with the greatest solemnity on that evening in the mine which contains the most valuable lobe of ore, which is supernaturally lighted up with candles in the most brilliant manner, and the service chanted by unseen choristers."—P. 46.

The poet Uhland has a beautiful poem entitled *Die Verlorne Kirche*. Lord Lindsay says:

"I subjoin, in illustration of the symbolism, and the peculiar emotions born of Gothic architecture, *The Lost Church* of the poet Uhland, founded, I apprehend, on an ancient tradition of the Sinaitic peninsula."—*Sketches of Christian Art.*

I give the first stanza of his translation:

"Oft in the forest far one hears
A passing sound of distant bells;
Nor legends old, nor human wit,
Can tell us whence the music swells.
From the *Lost Church* 'tis thought that soft
Faint ringing cometh on the wind:
Once many pilgrims trod the path,
But no one now the way can find."

See also *Das Versunkene Kloster*, by the same sweet poet, commencing:

"Ein Kloster ist versunken
Tief in den wilden See."

After Port Royal (in the West Indies) was submerged, at the close of the seventeenth century, sailors in those parts for many years had stories of anchoring in the chimneys and steeples, and would declare they heard the church bells ringing beneath the water, agitated by the waves or spirits of the deep.

The case of the Round Towers seen in Lough Neagh, I need not bring forward, as no sound of bells has ever been heard from them.

There is one *lost church* so famous as to occur to the mind of every reader, I mean that of the Ten Tribes of Israel. After the lapse of thousands of years, we have here an historical problem, which time, perhaps, will never solve. We have a less famous, but still most interesting, instance of a lost church in Greenland. Soon after the introduction of Christianity, about the year 1000, a number of churches and a monastery were erected along the east coast of Greenland, and a bishop was ordained for the spiritual guidance of the colony. For some four hundred years an intercourse was maintained between this colony and Norway and Denmark. In the year 1406 the last bishop was sent over to Greenland. Since then the colony *has not been heard of*. Many have been the attempts to recover this lost church of East Greenland, but hitherto in vain.

I could send you a Note on a cognate subject, but I fear it would occupy too much of your space,—that of *Happy Isles*, or *Islands of the Blessed*. The tradition respecting these happy isles is very wide-spread, and obtains amongst nearly every nation of the globe; it is, perhaps, a relic of a primeval tradition of Eden. Some have caught glimpses of these isles, and some more favoured mortals have even landed, and returned again with senses dazzled at the ravishing sights they have seen. But in every case after these rare favours, these mystic lands have remained invisible as before, and the way to them has been sought for in vain. Such are the tales told with reverent earnestness, and listened to with breathless interest, not only by the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans of old, but by the Irishman, the Welshman, the Hindoo, and the Red Indian of to-day.

EIRIONNACH.—(Vol. vii. p. 413.)

PURE RAIN WATER.

Pure rain water is said to be an infallible cure for sore eyes, and cases are reported to the writer by persons who have tried and fancy they have proved its efficacy. The rain water must be collected in a clean open vessel, *in the month of June*, and must not be contaminated by being previously collected by any other means; it will then remain pure for any length of time, if preserved in a bottle.

T. D.—(Vol. v. p. 223.)

Gainsbro'.

PRIMROSEN.

At Cockfield, Suffolk, there are none, nor, it is said, do they thrive when planted; though they are numerous in all the surrounding villages, which do not apparently differ from Cockfield in soil.

The village legend says that here, too, they once were plentiful, but when Cockfield was depopulated by the plague, they also caught the infection and died, nor have they flourished since that time.

In East Norfolk some old women are still found who believe that if a less number of primrosen than thirteen be brought into a house on the first occasion of bringing any in, so many eggs only will each hen or goose hatch that season. When recently admitted into deacon's orders, my gravity was sorely tried by being called on to settle a quarrel between two old women, arising from one of them having given one primrose to her neighbour's child, for the purpose of making her hens hatch but one chicken out of each set of eggs. And it was seriously maintained that the charm had been successful.

Since then I have heard that it only has an influence over geese. Perhaps this may account in some measure for the belief. In early seasons, persons are induced to carry in specimens of the first spring flowers that they find. In such seasons, too, fowls lay early, and perhaps do not sufficiently protect their eggs. The ungenial weather which too frequently succeeds spoils the eggs, and the effect is attributed to the "primrosen" of course; the cases where a few flowers are brought in, and the fowls have numerous broods, remain unnoticed. E. G. R.—(Vol. vii. p. 201.)

CAMBRIDGESHIRE FOLK LORE.

The following charm is used in the county of Cambridge by young men and women who are desirous of knowing the name of their future husbands or wives. The "clover of two" means a piece of clover with only two leaves upon it.

"A Clover, a Clover of two,
Put it in your right shoe;
The first young man [woman] you meet,
In field, street, or lane,
You'll have him [her] or one of his [her] name."

HARRIET NORMAN.—(Vol. x. p. 321.)

Fulbourn.

NORFOLK FOLK LORE.

"*Led Will*," *or* "*Will Led*" (*probably from* "*Way laid*").—When about ten years old, I remember one

Winsen, our old washerwoman (whose habit it was to come early on those *waterholie* days, that she might make a long day at the tub), astonishing the servant at breakfast, by relating a circumstance that happened to her that morning. The distance from her house to my father's was about half a mile; and in a meadow, across which the footpath lays, is a hollow place about four feet deep, and ten or twelve yards wide. She stated that each time she attempted to cross this place she was irresistibly, and against her will, prevented by some invisible power; or, as she said, was "Will led," and was obliged to go round another and a longer way.

She did not appear to be stating what she did not fully believe in, as there was really no reason whatever for her using it for any purpose of deception: and I believe such a superstition still exists amongst the illiterate of this county. RUSTICUS. — (Vol. xii. p. 489.)

Norwich.

THE DEVIL.

"According to the superstition of the west countries, if you meet the devil, you may either cut him in half with a straw, or force him to disappear by spitting over his horns."—*Essays on his own Times*, by S. T. Coleridge, vol. iii. p. 967.

J. M. B. — (Vol. vii. p. 81.)

"WINTER THUNDER."

I was conversing the other day with a very old farmer on the disastrous rains and storms of the present season, when he told me that he thought we had not yet seen the worst; and gave as a reason the following proverb:

"Winter thunder and summer flood
Bode England no good."

H. T. — (Vol. vii. p. 81.)

Ingatestone Hall, Essex.

HERTFORDSHIRE FOLK LORE.

Hertfordshire, notwithstanding its proximity to the metropolis, still contains some localities where as yet the schoolmaster is known by tradition only. Consequently, whilst there may be much ignorance to deplore, there is also in those sequestered nooks as trusting a belief in many harmless scientific heresies as Primate Cullen himself could well desire.

For instance; from as true an example of unsophisticated humanity as one might hope to meet with in this prosaic age, a good-natured, garrulous old Benedick, I gathered a fact not perhaps known to every gardener. I was admiring what seemed to me to be a very fine specimen of a herb, with which I was cockney enough not to be very familiar. "That be rosemary, sir," said the worthy cottager; "and they do say it only grows where the missis is master, and it do grow here like wildfire."

Strolling in the garden of another villager, I saw a mouse, not one of the little devouring animals so abhorred by clean and careful housewives, but a pretty taper-snouted out-door resident, quite as destructive in his habits, lying dead upon one of the paths. No marks of violence were visible upon it, and I was earnestly assured that these mice, whenever they attempt to cross a footpath, always die in the effort. Putting a credulous face upon this piece of information, I was met by the reply, "Ah! you Lunnuners doant know everything; why I've found 'em dead upon the paths scores o' times, and I know they can't get across alive."

During a short visit on Easter Sunday in last year at the house of an aged relative, a widow farmer close upon her eightieth year, the rain fell copiously for some hours; remarking upon which, the old dame exclaimed, "They do say in these parts

> "'A good deal of rain on Easter-day
> Gives a crop of good grass, but little good hay;'

and I'm much afear'd it'll be so *to-year*."

HENRY CAMPKIN. — (Vol. vi. p. 123.)

A SCORE OF SUPERSTITIOUS SAYINGS.

1. *Adder.* "Look under the deaf adder's belly, and you'll find marked, in mottled colours, these words:

> 'If I could hear as well as see,
> No man of life [*sic*] should master me!'"

(This saying was related to me by a friend, a native of Lewes, Sussex, where it is common.)

2. *Adder-skin.* "It'll bring you good luck to hang an ether-skin o'er the chimbly [chimney-piece]." (Heard in Leicestershire.)

3. *Beanfield.* "Sleep in a bean-field all night if you want to have awful dreams, or go crazy." (In Leicestershire.)

4. *Chime-hours.* "A child born in chime-hours will have the power to see spirits." (A Somerset friend.)

5. *Egg-shells.* "Always poke a hole through your egg-shell before you throw it away." — Why? "If you don't the fairies will put to sea to wreck the ships." (Somerset. Query, For fairies, read witches?)

6. *Eyebrows.* "It's a good thing to have meeting eyebrows. You'll never know trouble." (Various places.)

7. *Fern-root.* "Cut a fern-root slantwise, and you'll see a picture of an oak-tree: the more perfect, the luckier chance for you." (Croydon and elsewhere.)

8. *Flowering Myrtle.* "That's the luckiest plant to have in your window. Water it every morning, and be proud of it." (Somerset.)

9. *Harvest Spider.* "The *harvest-man* has got four things on its back, — the scythe, the rake, the sickle, and [Query the fourth?] It's most unlucky for the reaper to kill it on purpose." (From an Essex man.)

10. *Holly, Ivy, &c.* "All your *Christmas* should be burnt on Twelfth-day morning." (London, &c.)

11. *Lettuce.* "O'er-much lettuce in the garden will stop a young wife's bearing." (Richmond, Surrey)

12. *May-baby.* "A May-baby's always sickly. You may try, but you'll never rear it." (Various.)

13. *May-kitten.* "You should drown a May-kitten. It's unlucky to keep it." (Somerset.)

14. *New Moon.* "You may see as many new moons at once through a silk handkerchief, as there are years before you will marry." (Leicestershire.)

15. *Onions.* "In buying onions always go in by one door of the shop, and come out by another. Select a shop with two doorways. These onions, placed under your pillow on St. Thomas's Eve, are sure to bring visions of your true-love, your future husband." (London, &c.)

16. *Parsley.* "Where parsley's grown in the garden, there'll be a death before the year's out. (London and Surrey.)

17. *Ring-finger.* "The ring-finger, stroked along any sore or wound, will soon heal it. All the other fingers are poisonous, especially the fore-finger." (Somerset.)

18. *Salt.* "Help to salt, help to sorrow." (Various.)

19. *Three Dogs.* "If three dogs chase a rabbit or a hare, they can't kill it." (Surrey.)

20. *White Cow.* "A child that sucks a white cow will thrive better." (Wilts.)

J. Westby Gibson. — (Vol. vii. p. 152.)

CURE FOR AGUE.

One of my parishioners suffering from ague was advised to catch a large spider and shut him up in a box, as he pines away the disease is supposed to wear itself out.

ϟ —(Vol. ii. p. 130.)

Somerset.

A few years since, a lady in the south of Ireland was celebrated far and near, amongst her poorer neighbours, for the cure of this disorder. Her universal remedy was a large house-spider alive, and enveloped in treacle or preserve. Of course the parties were carefully kept in ignorance of what the wonderful remedy was.

Whilst I am on the subject of cures, I may as well state that in parts of the co. Carlow, the blood drawn from a black cat's ear, and rubbed upon the part affected, is esteemed a certain cure for St. Anthony's fire.

JUNIOR. — (Vol. ii. p. 259.)

Looking over some family papers lately, I found the following charm to cure the ague in an old diary; the date on the paper is 1751.

"*Charm to cure the Ague.*

"When Jesus saw y^e^ cross, whereon his body should be crucified, his body shook, and y^e^ Jewes asked him had he the Ague? he answered and said, 'Whosoever keepeth this in mind or writing shall not be troubled with Fever or Ague;' so, Lord, help thy servant trusting in thee. Then say the Lord's prayer.

"This is to be read before it is folded, then knotted, and not opened after."

PEREDUR. — (Vol. v. p. 413.)

About a mile from Berkhampstead, in Hertfordshire, on a spot where two roads cross each other, are a few oak trees called *cross oaks*. Here aguish patients used to resort, and peg a lock of their hair into one of these oaks, then, by a sudden wrench, transfer the lock from their heads to the tree, and return home with the full conviction that the ague had departed with the severed lock. Persons now living affirm they have often seen hair thus left pegged into the oak, for one of these trees only was endowed with the healing power. The frequency of failure, however, to cure the disease, and the unpleasantness of the operation, have entirely destroyed the popular faith in this remedy; but that expedients quite as absurd and superstitious, and even more disgusting, are still practised to remove diseases, is fully proved by several instances recorded in "N. & Q."

And here I must express, what will be considered by some of its readers an extraordinary opinion, that education alone has not, and will not, expel superstition. It may change its character, but it will not rid the mind of its baneful influence. Superstition, I believe, may be proved to be perfectly independent of education, as it

exists almost equally among the highly educated and the most ignorant, while persons from both these classes may be found equally free from its degrading trammels. A work designed to illustrate this fact or opinion would be extremely interesting and instructive, and I shall be glad to hear that some able person has entered on such an undertaking. The folk lore of "N. & Q." will be very useful, and may be made more so towards the accomplishment of this object, if instances of superstitious notions and practices among the higher classes, and they abound, be also included. W. H. K. — (Vol. vi. p. 5.)

"Cut a few hairs from the cross marked on a donkey's shoulders. Enclose these hairs in a small bag, and wear it on your breast, next to the skin. If you keep your purpose secret, a speedy cure will be the result."

The foregoing charm was told to me a short time since by the agent of a large landed proprietor in a fen country. My informant gravely added, that he had known numerous instances of this charm being practised, and that in every case a cure had been effected. From my own knowledge, I can speak of another charm for the ague, in which the fen people put great faith, viz. a spider, covered with dough, and taken as a pill.

CUTHBERT BEDE, B.A. — (Vol. ix. p. 243.)

HINDOO FOLK LORE.

I have been told that the poor Hindoos have a belief that little children are never exposed to danger from the bite of venomous serpents, and that the reason they give for this is, that the serpent is a very wise animal, and knows that it ought not to injure little children, because they are innocent of sin. WM. FRASER, B.C.L.—(Vol. x. p. 403.)

DRAGONS' BLOOD.

A peculiar custom exists among a class, with whom unfortunately the schoolmaster had not yet come very much

in contact, when supposed to be deserted or slighted by a lover, of procuring dragons' blood; which being carefully wrapped in paper, is thrown on the fire, and the following lines said:

"May he no pleasure or profit see,
Till he comes back again to me."

R. J. S. — (Vol. xi. p. 242.)

GREENOCK FOLK LORE.

1. *Fly lucky.* — Amongst our deep sea fishermen there is a most comical idea, that if a fly falls into the glass from which any one has been drinking, or is about to drink, it is considered a sure and true omen of good luck to the drinker, and is always noticed as such by the company. Where can this odd idea have come from, and what can be the meaning of it?

2. *Deaf and Dumb Fortune-tellers.* — It is generally held, by country folk hereabout, that if a fortune be *spae'd* by a person who is deaf and dumb, and written with a stick on the ground, it *must* come true. Consequently such fortune-tellers (forgive the bull) are in high request among the lads and lassies. ANON. — (Vol. xii. p. 488.)

Greenock.

GABRIEL HOUNDS.

Seeing that MR. YARRELL, the distinguished ornithologist, is a contributor to "N. & Q.," may I ask that gentleman, or any other correspondent, what is the species of bird whose peculiar yelping cry during its nocturnal migrations, has given rise to the superstition of the "Gabriel Hounds," so common in some rural districts?

D. — (Vol. v. p. 534.)

To this query MR. YARRELL replies as follows:—

The term occurs in Mr. Halliwell's *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words, &c.*, vol. i. p. 388., with the following explanation: —

"At Wednesbury, in Staffordshire, the colliers going to their pits early in the morning hear the noise of a pack of hounds in the air, to which they give the name of *Gabriel's Hounds*, though the more sober and judicious take them only to be wild geese making this noise in their flight.—Kennett, MS. Lansd. 1033."

The species here alluded to is the Bean Goose, *Anser segetum*, of authors. A few of them breed in Scotland and its islands, but by far the larger portion breed still farther north, in Scandinavia. Of the various birds which resort to this country to pass the winter season the Bean Goose is one of the first. I have seen very large flocks in Norfolk early in September, where they feed on the stubbles. I have good authority for their appearance in Gloucestershire, in the vicinity of the Severn, by the last week in August. This is in accordance with the habits of this goose in some parts of the Continent; Sonnerat and M. de Selis Longchamps calling it *l'oie des moissons*, or Harvest Goose. They are frequently very noisy when on the wing during the night, and the sound has been compared to that of a pack of hounds in full cry.

WM. YARRELL.—(Vol. v. p. 596.)

HAMPSHIRE FOLK LORE.

In Hampshire the country people believe that a healing power exists in the alms collected at the administration of the sacrament, and many of them use the money as a charm to cure the diseases of the body. A short time ago a woman came to a clergyman, and brought with her half-a crown, asking at the same time for five "sacrament sixpences" in exchange. She said that one of her relations was ill, and that she wished to use the money as a charm to drive away the disease. This superstition may have arisen from the once prevalent custom of distributing the alms in the church to those of the poor who were present at the sacrament.

I have heard that the negroes in Jamaica attach the same "gifts of healing" to the consecrated bread, and often, if they can escape notice, will carry it away with them.

F. M. MIDDLETON. — (Vol. viii. p. 617.)

REMEDY FOR JAUNDICE.

I scarcely know whether ears polite will tolerate the record of a sovereign remedy for jaundice which fell under my notice in a parish in Dorsetshire a few weeks since, but which I find, upon inquiry, to be generally known and practised in the neighbourhood. The patient is made to eat *nine lice* on a piece of bread and butter. In the case referred to, I am bound to state, for the credit of the parish, that the animalcules were somewhat difficult of attainment; but that, after having been duly collected by the indefatigable labours of the village doctress, they were administered with the most perfect success.

C. W. B. — (Vol. x. p. 321.)

The remedy for jaundice, recorded by C. W. B., is not peculiar to Dorsetshire. The learnd Fred. Hoffmann (of Halle) made a note of it in 1675, in his *Clavis Pharmaceutica Schröderiana*, p. 705.:

"Pediculus. Contrà *icterum* devorantur à rusticis nō ix, et in atrophiâ à nonnullis probantur."

Vertaur. — (Vol. ii. p. 16.)

Hartford, Conn.

CHARMS FOR WARTS.

Count most carefully the number of warts; take a corresponding number of nodules or knots from the stalks of any of the *cerealia* (wheat, oats, barley); wrap these in a cloth, and deposit the packet in the earth; *all the steps of the operation being done secretly.* As the nodules decay the warts will disappear. Some artists think it necessary that each wart should be *touched* by a separate nodule.

This practice was very rife in the north of Scotland some fifty years since, and no doubt is so still. It was regarded as very effective, and certainly had plenty of evidence of the *post-hoc-ergo-propter-hoc* order in its favour.

Is this practice prevalent in England?

It will be remarked that this belongs to the category

of *Vicarious Charms*, which have in all times and in all ages, in great things and in small things, been one of the favourite resources of poor mortals in their difficulties. Such charms (for all analogous practices may be so called) are, in point of fact, *sacrifices* made on the principle so widely adopted, — *qui facit per alium facit per se.* The common witch-charm of melting an image of wax stuck full of pins before a slow fire, is a familiar instance. Everybody knows that the party *imaged* by the wax continues to suffer all the tortures of pin-pricking until he or she finally melts away (colliquescit), or dies in utter emaciation.

EMDEE.—(Vol. ii. p. 19.)

Steal a piece of meat from a butcher's stall or his basket, and after having well rubbed the parts affected with the stolen morsel, bury it under a gateway, at a four lane ends, or, in case of emergency, in any secluded place. All this must be done so secretly as to escape detection: and as the portion of meat decays the warts will disappear. This practice is very prevalent in Lancashire and some parts of Yorkshire: and two of my female acquaintances having *tried* the remedy, stoutly maintain its efficacy.

T. T. W.— (Vol. ii. p. 68.)

Burnley.

Referring to EMDEE's charm for warts, I may state that a very similar superstition prevails in the neighbourhood of Manchester: — Take a piece of twine, making upon it as many knots as there are warts to be removed; touch each wart with the corresponding knot; and bury the twine in a moist place, saying at the same time, "There is none to redeem it besides thee." As the process of decay goes on, the warts gradually disappear. H. — (Vol. ii. p. 68.)

A year or two ago I was staying in Somersetshire, and having a wart myself, was persuaded to have it "charmed." The village-charmer was summoned; he first cut off a slip of elder-tree, and made a notch in it for every wart. He then rubbed the elder against each, strictly enjoining me to think no more about it, as if I looked often at the warts the charm would fail.

In about a week the warts had altogether disappeared, to the delight of the operator.

N. A. B. — (Vol. ii. p. 150.)

In Lord Bacon's *Sylva Sylvarum, or a Natural History in Ten Centuries* (No. 997.), the great philosopher gives a minute account of the practice, from personal experience, in the following words: —

"The taking away of warts, by rubbing them with somewhat that afterward is put to waste and consume, is a common experiment; and I do apprehend it the rather, because of mine own experience. I had from my childhood a wart upon one of my fingers; afterwards, when I was about sixteen years old, being then at Paris, there grew upon both my hands a number of warts (at least an hundred), in a month's space; the English Ambassador's lady, who was a woman far from superstition, told me one day she would help me away with my warts; whereupon she got a piece of lard with the skin on, and rubbed the warts all over with the fat side, and amongst the rest, that wart which I had from my childhood; then she nailed the piece of lard with the fat toward the sun, upon a post of her chamber window, which was to the south. The success was, that within five weeks' space all the warts went quite away, and that wart which I had so long endured for company; but at the rest I did little marvel, because they came in a short time and might go away in a short time again, but the going of that which had stayed so long doth yet stick with me. They say the like is done by rubbing of warts with a green elder stick, and then burying the stick to rot in muck."

J. M. B. — (Vol. ii. p. 181.)

In some parts of Ireland, especially towards the south, they place great faith in the following charm: — When a funeral is passing by, they rub the warts and say three times, "May these warts and this corpse pass away and never more return;" sometimes adding, "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

JARLTZBERG. — (Vol. ii. p. 226.)

In Buckinghamshire I have heard of the charming away of warts by touching each wart with a separate green pea, each pea being wrapped in paper by itself and buried, the wart will vanish as the pea decays.

J. W. H. — (Vol. ii. p. 430.)

The charm as I have heard it, consists in rubbing the warts with some small stones, which are to be wrapped up in a piece of paper, and thrown down at some cross roads. The person who picks up the parcel will have the warts, which will from that time leave the first person.

R. J. Allen. — (Vol. vi. p. 409.)

"Bean Swads" are a cure for warts. I know this from experience, having, when a boy, had my left hand most unpleasantly disfigured by them. They all, however, disappeared in less than a fortnight, after being well rubbed with a bean swad, and the pod thrown away.

C. — S. T. P. — (Vol. vi. p. 519.)

I remember in Leicestershire seeing the following charm employed for the removal of a number of warts on my brother, then a child about five years old. In the month of April or May he was taken to an ash-tree by a lady, who carried also a paper of fresh pins; one of these was first struck through the bark, and then pressed through the wart, until it produced pain; it was then taken out and stuck into the tree. Each wart was thus treated, a separate pin being used for each. The warts certainly disappeared in about six weeks. I saw the same tree a year or two ago when it was very thickly studded over with old pins, each the index of a cured wart. T. J. — (Vol. vii. p. 81.)

Some fifty years ago, a near relation of mine, then a little girl, was much troubled with warts, of which she had thirty-two on one hand, and two on the other. Accidentally hearing one day from a visitor, of an acquaintance who had been cured by cutting a nick or notch in an elder stick for each wart, touching the wart with the notch, and burying the stick *without telling any one of it*, she tried the plan, and utterly forgot the circumstance till some weeks after, when an intimate friend of the family asked her how the warts were going on. On looking at her hand the thirty-two were gone, but the other two, which had not been charmed, were still there. She subsequently tried to get rid of these two in the same manner; but the charm would seem to have

been broken by her telling of it, and they remained where they were.

As this circumstance happened in the family of a highly respectable London tradesman, at his country-house in one of the neighbouring villages, it seems to indicate that fifty years ago charms were in use in a class of society in which we should not now expect to find them.

The Devonshire charm for a wart is to *steal* a piece of meat from a butcher's shop, rub it over the wart in secret, and throw it over a wall over your left shoulder.

N. J. A. — (Vol. xi. p. 7.)

Twenty-five years ago there resided at the little village of Ferry Hincksey, near Oxford, in a cottage adjoining the church, an old woman who had a great reputation for charming warts. Being at that time a lad, and much troubled with these excrescences, one of which was as large as a four-penny piece, I was recommended to pay the old lady a visit. With fear and trembling I entered her little hut, and after being interrogated as to the number of warts upon my person, a small stick was produced, upon which certain notches were cut, a cross having been first slightly imprinted on the larger wart; the old lady then retired into her garden to bury the stick, and I was dismissed. From that day my troublesome and unsightly adherents began to *crumble away*, and I have never been troubled since. *Silence* as to the transaction is strictly enjoined, nor must any remuneration be offered until the warts have quite disappeared.

Z.z. — (Vol. xi. p. 95.)

"NETTLE IN, DOCK OUT."

Some time since, turning over the leaves of Clarke's *Chaucer*, I stumbled on the following passage in "Troilus and Cressida," vol. ii. p. 104.: —

> "Thou biddest me that I should love another
> All freshly newe, and let Creseidé go,
> It li'th not in my power, levé brother,
> And though I might, yet would I not do so:

> But can'st thou playen racken to and fro,
> *Nettle in Dock out*, now this now that, Pandare?
> Now foulé fall her for thy woe that care."

I was delighted to find the charm for a nettle sting, so familiar to my childish ear, was as old as Chaucer's time, and exceedingly surprised to stumble on the following note: —

> "This appears to be a proverbial expression implying inconstancy; but the origin of the phrase is unknown to all the commentators on our poet."

If this be the case, Chaucer's commentators may as well be told that children in Northumberland use friction by a dock-leaf as the approved remedy for the sting of a nettle, or rather the approved charm; for the patient, while rubbing in the dock-juice, should keep repeating, —

> "Nettle in, dock out,
> Dock in, nettle out,
> Nettle in, dock out,
> Dock rub nettle out."

The meaning is therefore obvious. Troilus is indignant at being recommended to forget his Cressida for a new love, just as a child cures a nettle-sting by a dock-leaf.

(Vol. iii. p. 368.)

If your correspondent will refer to *The Literary Gazette*, March 24, 1849, No. 1679., he will find that I gave precisely the same explanation of that obscure passage of Chaucer's *Troilus and Creseide*, lib. iv., in a paper which I contributed to the British Archæological Association.

FRAS. CROSSLEY. — (Vol. iii. p. 205.)

In the days of my childhood, long before I had ever heard of Chaucer, I used invariably, when I was stung with nettles, to rub the part affected with a dock-leaf or stalk and repeat,

> "Nettle out, dock in."

This charm is so common in Huntingdonshire at this day that it seems to come to children almost instinctively. None of them can tell where they first heard it, any more than why they use it. ARUN. — (Vol. iii. p. 368.)

[We will add two further illustrations of this passage of Chaucer, and the popular rhyme on which it is founded. The first is from Mr. Akerman's *Glossary of Provincial Words and Phrases in Use in Wiltshire*, where we read—

"When a child is stung, he plucks a dock-leaf, and laying it on the part affected, sings—

'Out 'ettle
In dock
Dock shall ha a new smock;
'Ettle zhant
Ha' narrun.'"

Then follows a reference by Mr. Akerman to the passage in *Troilus and Creseide*.—Our second illustration is from Chaucer himself, who in his *Testament of Love* (p. 482. ed. Urry), has the following passage:

"Ye wete well Ladie eke (quoth I), that I have not plaid raket, Nettle in, Docke out, and with the weathercocke waved."

Mr. Akerman's work was, we believe, published in 1846; and, at all events, attention was called to these passages in the *Athenæum* of the 12th September in that year, No. 985.]

DIVINATION AT MARRIAGES.

The following practices are very prevalent at marriages in these districts; and as I do not find them noticed by Brand in the last edition of his *Popular Antiquities*, they may perhaps be thought worthy a place in "N. & Q."

1. Put a wedding ring into the *posset*, and after serving it out, the unmarried person whose cup contains the ring will be the first of the company to be married.

2. Make a common flat cake of flour, water, currants, &c., and put therein a wedding ring and a sixpence. When the company is about to retire on the wedding-day, the cake must be broken and distributed amongst the unmarried females. She who gets the ring in her portion of the cake will shortly be married, and the one who gets the sixpence will die an old maid. T. T. W. — (Vol. ii. p. 117.)

Burnley.

Being lately present on the occasion of a wedding at a town in the East Riding of Yorkshire, I was witness to the fol-

lowing custom, which seems to take rank as a genuine scrap of folk-lore. On the bride alighting from her carriage at her father's door, a plate covered with morsels of bride's cake was flung from a window of the second story upon the heads of the crowd congregated in the street below; and the divination, I was told, consists in observing the fate which attends its downfall. If it reach the ground in safety, without being broken, the omen is a most *un*favourable one. If, on the other hand, the plate be shattered to pieces (and the more the better,) the auspices are looked upon as most happy. OXONIENSIS. — (Vol. vii. p. 545.)

ST. GOVEN'S BELL.

The following legend is current in Pembrokeshire. On the south-west coast of Pembrokeshire is situated a little chapel, called St. Goven's, from the saint who is supposed to have built it, and lived in a cell excavated in the rock at its east end, but little larger than sufficient to admit the body of the holy man. The chapel, though small, quite closes the pass between the rock-strewn cove and the high lands above, from which it is approached by a long and steep flight of stone steps; in its open belfry hung a beautifully-formed silver bell. Between it and the sea, and near high-water mark, is a well of pure water, often sought by sailors, who were always received and attended to by the good saint.

Many centuries ago, at the close of a calm summer evening, a boat entered the cove, urged by a crew with piratical intent, who, regardless alike of the sanctity of the spot, and of the hospitality of its inhabitant, determined to possess themselves of the bell. They succeeded in detaching it from the chapel and conveying it to their boat, but they had no sooner left the shore than a violent storm suddenly raged, the boat was wrecked, and the pirates found a watery grave; at the same moment by some mysterious agency the silver bell was borne away, and entombed in a large and massive stone on the brink of the well. And still, when the

stone is struck, the silver tones of the bell are heard softly lamenting its long imprisonment, and sweetly bemoaning the hope of freedom long deferred.

DYFED.— (Vol. xii. p. 201.)

SUPERSTITIONS IN SCOTLAND.

The Evil Eye. — In the Highlands if a stranger looks at a cow, the common people think that the animal will waste away from the "evil eye," and they offer you some of the milk to drink, by which they suppose that all evil consequences are averted. R. J. ALLEN. —(Vol. vi. p. 409.)

Salt. — I offered to help an old Highland lady at dinner one day to some salt from the "cellar," which stood much nearer to me than to her; she gravely put back my hand, and drew away her plate, saying at the same time, with a kind of shudder, between her teeth:

"Help me to *saut!*
Help me to *sorrow!*"

Sneezing.— It is a thing known, and fixed as the eternal fates in the minds of all douce nurses, and especially all "howdies" whatsoever, that a new-born child is in the fairy spells until it *sneezes;* then all danger is past. I once overheard an old and most reverend-looking dame, of great experience in howdie-craft, crooning over a new-born child; and then, watching it intently and in silence for nearly a minute, she said, taking a huge pinch of snuff, "Oich! oich! No yet — no yet." Suddenly the youngster exploded in a startling manner into a tremendous sneeze; when the old lady suddenly bent down, and, as far as I could see, drew her forefinger across the brows of the child, very much as if making the sign of the cross (although, as a strict Calvinist, she would have been scandalised at the idea), and joyfully exclaimed, "God sain the bairn, it's *no* a *warlock!*" Even people of education I have heard say, and *maintain stoutly*, that no idiot ever sneezed or could sneeze!

Marriage Superstition.— The sister of an old servant was shortly since married to a sailor. I asked Katie if the

bridal party had gone *down* the water for a pleasure sail. She answered me at once, looking quite flurried: "Losh, no, Sir! that would na be *canny*, ye ken; we gaed *up* the water." She could give me no reasons, but abundant examples of couples who had impiously disregarded the custom, and had, in Katie's phraseology, "gane aw wrang" in consequence. In some instances the bride had come to her death; and in one, both bride, bridegroom, and two bridesmaids were drowned. What can be the origin of this most singular superstition?

My old friend the "herd" tells me, that if a sheep drag past a heather bush, and leave on it a portion of its wool, *that* bush must die with the year and day. What is the meaning of such a belief? C. D. A. —(Vol. xii. p. 200.)

CURE FOR WENS.

Calling, a few days ago, at a cottage in the adjoining village (Cuddesden, in Oxfordshire), I inquired of its occupant, a woman who is afflicted with a large goître, or external swelling of the throat, whether she suffered much inconvenience from its increasing size, and whether the doctors gave her much hope of relief? She answered, that as yet it did not cause her much inconvenience; that the doctors gave her no hope of its diminution; but that there was one certain remedy which she should have tried, but for the lack of opportunity, viz. stroking the swollen neck with the dead hand of a man who had been hanged! On my expressing disbelief in the efficacy of this singular application, she assured me that her own father had been afflicted with a similar disease; that he had tried this remedy, and had been completely cured by it, the swelling decreasing gradually, as the hand of the man mouldered away; and that from that time until his death he had had no return of the disease.

Denton. W. Sneyd. — (Vol. vi. p. 145.)

I copy the following from *The Times* of May 9:

"At an early hour on the morning of the 1st of May, a woman,

respectably attired, and accompanied by an elderly gentleman, applied for admittance to the cemetery at Plymouth. On being allowed to enter, they proceeded to the grave of the last man interred; and the woman, who had a large wen in her throat, rubbed her neck three times each way on each side of the grave, departing before sunrise. By this process it was expected the malady would be cured."

P. J. F. GANTILLON. — (Vol. xii. p. 201.)

SNEEZING.

"The custom of blessing persons when they sneeze," says Brand, "has, without doubt been derived to the Christian world, where it generally prevails, from the time of heathenism." In addition to the interesting notice of the prevalence of this custom in Europe, and many remote parts of Asia and Africa, given by Brand, I find traces of it amongst the American tribes at the period of the Spanish conquest.

In 1542, when Hernando de Soto, the famous conquest-actor of Florida, had an interview with the Cacique Guachoya, the following curious incident occurred:

"In the midst of their conversation, the Cacique happened to sneeze. Upon this, all his attendants bowed their heads, opened and closed their arms; and making their signs of veneration, saluted their prince with various phrases of the same purport: 'May the sun guard you,' 'may the sun be with you,' 'may the sun shine upon you,' 'defend you,' 'prosper you,' and the like; each uttered the phrase that came first to his mind, and for a short time there was a universal murmuring of these compliments."—*The Conquest of Florida under Hernando de Soto*, by Theodore Irving, vol. ii. p. 161.

Whence could the natives of the New World have derived a custom so strikingly similar to that which the ancients record? R. S. F. — (Vol. v. p. 364.)

Having occasion to look at the first edition of the *Golden Legend*, printed by Caxton, I met with the following passage, which may perhaps prove interesting to your correspondent, as showing that the custom of blessing persons when they sneeze "endured" in the fifteenth century. The

institution of the "Litany the more and the lasse," we are told, was justified, —

"For a right grete and grevous maladye: for as the Romayns had in the lenton lyued sobrely and in contynence, and after at Ester had receyud theyr Sauyour; after they disordered them in etyng, in drynkyng, in playes, in lecherye. And therefore our Lord was meuyed ayenst them and sente them a grete pestelence, which was called the Botche of impedymye, and that was cruell and sodayne, and caused peple to dye in goyng by the waye, in pleying, in leeyng atte table, and in spekyng one with another sodeynly they deyed. In this manere somtyme snesyng, they deyed; so that when any persone was herd snesyng, anone they that were by said to hym, God helpe you, or Cryst helpe, *and yet endureth the custome.* And also when he sneseth or gapeth he maketh to fore his face the signe of the crosse and blessith hym. And yet endureth this custome."—*Golden Legende*, edit. 1483, fo. xxi. b.

F. Somner Merryweather. — (Vol. v. p. 500.)

I have often seen, but where I cannot recollect, that the custom of saying "God bless you!" when any one sneezed, arose from the fact that in the great plague of Athens sneezing was an unfailing proof of returning convalescence.

Your classical readers will remember the anecdote told in the *Anabasis* of Xenophon (c. ii. sect. i.–v.). I copy from Mitford, who has besides a note to the purpose:

"At daybreak the troops were assembled, and Chirosophus, Cleanor, and Xenophon successively addressed them. An accident, in itself even ridiculous, assisted not a little, through the importance attributed to it by Grecian superstition, to infuse encouragement. Xenophon was speaking of that favour from the gods which a righteous cause entitled them to hope for against a perjured enemy, when somebody *sneezed.* Immediately the general voice addressed ejaculations to protecting Jupiter, whose omen it was supposed to be. A sacrifice to the god was then proposed; a universal shout declared approbation; and the whole army, in one chorus, sang the Pæan."—*History of Greece*, vol. v. p. 185. cap. xxiii. sect. iv.: Lond. 1835, 8vo.

We must not, however, forget that when Elisha restored the Shunammite's son to life —

"The child *sneezed* seven times, and the child opened his eyes."—2 *Kings*, iv. 35.

Rt. — (Vol. v. p. 572.)

D'Israeli, in the first series of the *Curiosities*, in a paper on the custom of saluting persons after sneezing, says:

"A memoir of the French Academy notices the practice in the New World, on the first discovery of America."

A relation of mine tells me, that when young he once fell down in a fit after a violent sneeze: the "Cryst helpe" may therefore not be totally superfluous!

A. A. D. — (Vol. v. p. 599.)

OLD SHOES THROWN FOR LUCK.

Can any of your readers inform me what is the origin of the custom of throwing an old shoe over the bride and bridegroom upon their leaving the church, or the "maison paternelle," after their wedding?

This ceremony, though peculiar as I believe to Scotland and our northern counties, has lately been adopted at our aristocratic marriages in London, and more should be known of its history. BRAYBROOKE.—(Vol. vii. p. 182.)

Brand, in his *Popular Antiquities*, observes, that it is accounted lucky by the vulgar to throw an old shoe after a person when they wish him to succeed in what he is going about. This custom is very prevalent in Norfolk whenever servants are going in search of new places; and especially when they are going to be married, a shoe is thrown after them as they proceed to church.

C. P. R. M.—(Vol. ii. p. 196.)

Some years ago, when the vessels engaged in the Greenland whale-fishery left Whitby, in Yorkshire, I observed the wives and friends of the sailors to throw old shoes at the ships as they passed the pier-head. N Π.—(Vol. ii. p. 196.)

Some light may perhaps be thrown on this mysterious custom by the following quotation from the *Réfutation des Opinions de Jean Wier*, by Bodin, the celebrated French jurisconsult, and author of the *Demonomanie des Sorciers* (Paris, 1586), to the quarto edition of which the *Réfutation*

is generally found attached. It may be necessary to observe, for the benefit of those unacquainted with demoniacal lore, that Wier, though a pupil of Cornelius Agrippa, and what would be now-a-days termed exceedingly superstitious, was far in advance of his age, and the first to assert that some, at least, of the many persons who were then burned for sorcery were merely hypochondriacs and lunatics,—fitter subjects for the care of the physician than the brand of the executioner. This *heterodox* opinion brought upon him a crowd of antagonistic replies, and amongst them the *Réfutation* of Bodin. During a cursory examination of Wier's voluminous demonological works (*De Lamiis Liber; Item de Commentariis Jejuniis; De Præstigiis Demonum, et Incantationibus ac Veneficiis:* Basil, 1583), I have not met with the passage underneath referred to by Bodin; but, no doubt, if time permitted, a closer search would discover it:

"Il se mocque aussi d'une Sorciere, à qui Sathan commanda de garder bien ses vieux souliers, pour un preservatif, et contre-charme contre les autre Sorciers. Je dy que ce conseil de Sathan a double sens, les souliers signifient les pechez, comme estas tousiours trainnez par les ordures. Et quand Dieu dist à Moyse et à Josué, oste tes souliers, ce lieu est pur, et sainct : il entendoit, comme dict Philon Hebrieu, qu'il faut bien nettoyer son ame de peches, pour contempler et louer Dieu. Mais pour converser avec Sathan, il faut estre souillé, et plongé en perpetuelle impietez et mechancetez : alors Sathan assistera à ses bons serviteurs. Et quand aux sens literal, nous avons dict que Sathan fait ce qu'il peut, pour destourner les hommes de la fiance de Dieu aux creatures, qui est la vraye definition de l'idolatrie, que les Theologiens ont baillie : tellement que qui croira, que ses vieux souliers, ou les bilets, et autres babioles qu'il porte, le peut garder de mal, il est perpetuelle idolatrie."

W. PINKERTON.—(Vol. vii. p. 288.)

Ham.

It will, I fear, be difficult to discover a satisfactory answer to LORD BRAYBROOKE'S questions on these points. They cannot certainly be traceable to a Pagan origin, for Cupid is always portrayed barefooted; and there is not, I believe, a single statue to be found of a sandalled Venus. I can certainly direct his Lordship to one author, a Christian author,

St. Gregory of Tours, who refers to a curious practice, and seemingly one well recognised, of lovers presenting *shoes*, as they now do *bouquets*, to the objects of their affection:

"Cumque, ut ætati huic convenit, amori se puellari præstaret affabilem, et cum poculis frequentibus etiam *calceamenta* deferret."—Gregor. Turon. *Ex Vitis Patrum*, vol. ii. p. 449.: see also same page, note 3.

W. B. MacCabe.—(Vol. vii. p. 288.)

The custom of throwing a shoe, taken from the left foot, after persons for good luck, has been practised in Norfolk from time immemorial, not only at weddings, but on all occasions where good luck is required. Some forty years ago, a cattle dealer desired his wife to "trull her left shoe arter him," when he started for Norwich to buy a lottery-ticket. As he drove off on his errand, he looked round to see if she performed the charm, and consequently he received the shoe in his face, with such force as to black his eyes. He went and bought his ticket, which turned up a prize of 600*l.*; and his son has assured me that his father always attributed his luck to the extra dose of shoe which he got.

E. G. R.—(Vol. vii. p. 288.)

The custom of throwing an old shoe after a person departing from home, as a mode of wishing him good luck and prosperity in his undertaking, is not confined to Scotland and the northern counties, nor to weddings. It prevails more or less, I believe, throughout the kingdom. I have seen it in Cheshire, and frequently in towns upon the seacoast. I once received one upon my shoulder, at Swansea, which was intended for a young sailor leaving his home to embark upon a trading voyage.

Edw. Hawkins.—(Vol. vii. p. 288.)

Your correspondents assume that the old shoe was thrown after the bride *for luck*, and for luck only. I doubt whether it was so in its origin.

Among barbarous nations, all transfers of property, all assertions and relinquishments of rights of dominion, were

marked by some external ceremony or rite; by which, in the absence of written documents, the memory of the vulgar might be impressed. When, among Scandinavian nations, land was bought or sold, a turf was delivered by the trader to the purchaser: and among the Jews, and probably among other oriental nations, a shoe answered the same purpose.

In Psalm lx., beginning with "O God, thou hast cast me off," there occurs the phrase, "Moab is my washpot; over Edom have I cast out my shoe." Immediately after it occurs the exclamation, "O God, who hast cast us off!" A similar passage occurs in Psalm cix.

By this passage I understand the Psalmist to mean that God would thoroughly cast off Edom, and cease to aid him in war or peace. This interpretation is consistent with the whole tenor of the Psalm.

The receiving of a shoe was an evidence and symbol of asserting or accepting dominion or ownership; the giving back a shoe, the symbol of rejecting or resigning it.

Among the Jews, the brother of a childless man was bound to marry his widow: or, at least, he "had the refusal of her," and the lady could not marry again till her husband's brother had formally rejected her. The ceremony by which this rejection was performed took place in open court, and is mentioned in Deut. xxv. If the brother publicly refused her, "she loosed his shoe from off his foot, and spat in his face;" or, as great Hebraists translate it, "spat before his face." *His* giving up the shoe was a symbol that *he* abandoned all dominion over her; and *her* spitting before *him* was a defiance, and an assertion of independence. This construction is in accordance with the opinions of Michaelis, as stated in his *Laws of Moses*, vol. ii. p. 31.

This practice is still further illustrated by the story of Ruth. Her nearest kinsman refused to marry her, and to redeem her inheritance: he was publicly called on so to do by Boaz, and as publicly refused. And the Bible adds, "as it was the custom in Israel concerning changing, that a man plucked off his shoe and delivered it to his neighbour," the kinsman plucked off his shoe and delivered it to Boaz as a

public renunciation of Ruth, of all dominion over her, and of his right of premarriage.

These ceremonies were evidently not unknown to the early Christians. When the Emperor Wladimir made proposals of marriage to the daughter of Ragnald, she refused him, saying, "That she would not take off her shoe to the son of a slave."

There is a passage in *Gregory of Tours* (c. 20.) where, speaking of espousals, he says, "The bridegroom, having given a ring to the fiancée, presents her with a shoe."

From Michelet's *Life of Luther* we learn, that the great reformer was at the wedding of Jean Luffte. After supper, he conducted the bride to bed, and told the bridegroom that, according to common custom, he ought to be master in his own house *when* his wife was not there: and for a symbol, he took off the husband's shoe, and put it upon the head of the bed—"afin qu'il prit ainsi la domination et gouvernement."

I would suggest, for the consideration of your correspondents, that the throwing a shoe after a bride was a symbol of renunciation of dominion and authority over her by her father or guardian; and the receipt of the shoe by the bridegroom, even if accidental, was an omen that that authority was transferred to him.

Surbiton. JOHN THRUPP.—(Vol. vii. p. 411.)

There is an old rhyme still extant, which gives an early date to this singular custom:

"When Britons bold,
Wedded of old,
Sandals were backward thrown,
The pair to tell,
That, ill or well,
The act was all their own."

An octogenarian of my acquaintance informs me that he heard himself thus anathematised when, leaving his native village with his bride, he refused to comply with the extortionate demands of an Irish beggar:

"Then it's bad luck goes wid yer,
For my shoe I toss;
An ye niver come back,
'Twill be no great loss."

CHARLES REED.—(Vol. viii. p. 377.)

I may be allowed to quote, from Tennyson's *Lyrical Monologue*—

"For this thou shalt from all things seek
Marrow of mirth and laughter;
And wheresoe'er thou move, Good Luck
Shall throw her old shoe after."

W. FRASER.—(Vol. v. p. 413.)

THE CROOKED SIXPENCE.

A bent coin is often given in the West of England for luck. A crooked sixpence is usually selected by careful grandmothers, aunts, and uncles, to bestow as the "handselling" of a new purse. The following extract, from the *Acts and Monuments* of John Foxe, illustrates the practice; it occurs in the relation of the martyrdom of Alice Benden at Canterbury, 1557:

"When she was at the stake she cast her handkerchief unto one John Banks, requiring him to keep the same in memory of her; and from about her middle she took a white lace, which she gave to her keeper, desiring him to give the same to her brother Roger Hall, and to tell him that it was the last band she was bound with except the chain. A shilling also of Philip and Mary she took forth, which her father had *bowed* and sent her when she was first sent to prison," &c.

S. R. P.—(Vol. x. p. 504.)

SYMPATHETIC CURES.

I transcribe the following from a curious, though not very rare, volume in duodecimo, entitled *Choice and Experimental Receipts in Physick and Chirurgery, as also Cordial and Distilled Waters and Spirits, Perfumes, and other Curiosities.* Collected by the Honourable and truly learned Sir Kenelm Digby, Kt., Chancellour to her Majesty the Queen Mother.

London : Printed for H. Brome, at the Star in Little Britain, 1668.

"*A Sympathetic Cure for the Tooth-ach.*— With an iron nail raise and cut the gum from about the teeth till it bleed, and that some of the blood stick upon the nail; then drive it into a wooden beam up to the head; after this is done you never shall have the tooth-ach in all your life." The author naively adds: "But whether the man used any spell, or said any words while he drove the nail, I know not; only I saw done all that is said above. This is used by several certain persons."

Amongst other "choice and experimental receipts" and "curiosities" which in this little tome are recommended for the cure of some of the "ills which flesh is heir to," one directs the patient to

"Take two parts of the moss growing on the skull of a dead man (pulled as small as you can with the fingers)."

Another enlarges on the virtue of

"A little bag containing some powder of toads calcined, so that the bag lay always upon the pit of the stomach next the skin, and presently it took away all pain as long as it hung there; but if you left off the bag the pain returned. A bag continueth in force but a month; after so long time you must wear a fresh one."

This, he says, "a person of credit" told him.

HENRY CAMPKIN.—(Vol. ii. p. 130.)

STRANGE REMEDIES.

I find some curious prescriptions in an old book entitled *The Pathway to Health*, &c. (I will not trouble you with the full title), "by Peter Levens, Master of Arts in Oxford, and Student in Physick and Chirurgery." ... Printed for J. W., and are to bee sold by Charles Tym, at the Three Bibles on London Bridge, MDCLXIV." The first is a charm

"*For all manner of falling evils.*— Take the blood of his little finger that is sick, and write these three verses following, and hang it about his neck:

'*Jasper fert Mirrham, Thus Melchior, Balthazar Aurum,*
Hæc quicumque secum portat tria nomina regum,
Solvitur à morbo, Domini pietate, caduca.'

and it shall help the party so grieved."

"*For a man or woman that is in a consumption.*—Take a brasse pot, and fill it with water, and set it on the fire, and put a great earthen pot within that pot, and then put in these parcels following: — Take a cock and pull him alive, then flea off his skin, then beat him in pieces; take dates a pound, and slit out the stones, and lay a layer of them in the bottom of the pot, and then lay a piece of the cock, and upon that some more of the dates, and take succory, endive, and parsley roots, and so every layer one upon another, and put in fine gold and some pearl, and cover the pot as close as may bee with coarse dow, and so let it distill a good while, and so reserve it for your use till such time as you have need thereof."

I could select some exceedingly ludicrous prescriptions (for the book contains 400 pages), but the most curious unfortunately happen to be the most indelicate.

ALEXANDER ANDREWS.—(Vol. ii. p. 435.)

NEW MOON SUPERSTITIONS.

If, when you look at the new moon for the first time, you think of one particular thing which you greatly desire to have, or to have accomplished, your wishes on that same point will be realised before the close of the year.

R. VINCENT.—(Vol. v. p. 485.)

Being lately on a visit in Yorkshire, I was amused one evening to find the servants of the house excusing themselves for being out of the way when the bell rang, on the plea that they had been "hailing the first new moon of the new year." This mysterious salutation was effected, I believe, by means of a looking-glass, in which the first sight of the moon was to be had, and the object to be gained was the important secret as to how many years would elapse before the marriage of the observers. If one moon was seen in the glass, one year; if two, two years; and so on. In the case in question, the maid and the boy saw only one moon a-piece. Whether the superstition would, in this instance, be suggestive to their minds of anything to be deduced from the coincidence, I do not know; but as they were both very old-

fashioned folks, I suppose the custom may not be unknown to those learned in Folk Lore.

OXONIENSIS.—(Vol. vii. p. 177.)

SOUL SEPARATING FROM THE BODY.

I remember, some forty years ago, hearing a servant from Lincolnshire relate a story of two travellers who laid down by the road-side to rest, and one fell asleep. The other, seeing a bee settle on a neighbouring wall and go into a little hole, put the end of his staff in the hole, and so imprisoned the bee. Wishing to pursue his journey, he endeavoured to awaken his companion, but was unable to do so, till, resuming his stick, the bee flew to the sleeping man and went into his ear. His companion then awoke him, remarking how soundly he had been sleeping, and asked what he had been dreaming of? "Oh!" said he, "I dreamt that you shut me up in a dark cave, and I could not awake till you let me out." The person who told me the story firmly believed that the man's soul was in the bee.

F. S.—(Vol. iii. p. 206.)

FOLK LORE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

In the Account Roll of Cardinal Thomas Langley, Bishop of Durham, the entry which I translate as follows is contained:

"Paid to Thomas Egliston for marking sixteen of my Lord's oxen with the mark of S^{t}. Wilfred, to the intent that they may escape a certain infirmity called the moryn (murrain), ix^{d}." [A.D. 1426—1427.] — *Hist. Dunelm. Script. Tres.* p. ccccxl.

WM. SIDNEY GIBSON.—(Vol. vi. p. 144.)

SUPERSTITIONS IN NORTH OF ENGLAND.

I find some curious popular superstitions prevalent in the north of England some three centuries ago recorded in the *Proceedings before the Special Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes appointed by Queen Elizabeth.* Thus:—

"Anthony Huggen presented for medicioning children with minit-ing a hammer as a smythe of kynde."

Again—

"John Watson presented for burying a quick dogg and a quick cowe."

And—

"Agnes, the wyf of John Wyse, als Winkam John Wyse, presented to be a medicioner for the waffe of an yll wynde, and for the fayryes."

Some of your readers may perhaps explain what these were. It is clear that they were superstitious practices of sufficient prevalence and influence on the popular mind to call for the interference of the queen's commissioners.

A. B.—(Vol. i. p. 294.)

SUPERSTITION ON THE DEATH OF GREAT MEN.

A superstition prevails among the lower classes of many parts of Worcestershire, that when storms, heavy rains, or other elemental strifes take place at the death of a great man, the spirit of the storm will not be appeased till the moment of burial. This superstition gained great strength on the occasion of the Duke of Wellington's funeral, when, after some weeks of heavy rain, and one of the highest floods ever known in this county, the skies began to clear, and both rain and flood abated. The storms which have been noticed to take place at the time of the death of many great men known to our history, may have had something to do with the formation of this curious notion in the minds of the vulgar. It was a common observation hereabout in the week before the interment of his Grace, "Oh, the rain won't give over till the Duke is buried!"

J. Noake.—(Vol. vi. p. 531.)

FISHERMEN'S SUPERSTITIONS.

A friend recently informed me that at Preston Pans the two following superstitious observances exist among the

fishermen of that place. If on their way to their boats they meet a pig, they at once turn back and defer their embarkation. This event is an omen that bodes ill for their fishery.

It is a favourite custom to set sail on the Sunday for the fishing grounds. A clergyman of the town is said to pray against their sabbath-breaking; and to prevent any injury accruing from his prayers, the fishermen make a small image of rags, and burn it on the top of their chimneys.

U.—(Vol. v. p. 5.)

"The herring fishing being very backward, some of the fishermen of Buckie, on Wednesday last, dressed a cooper in a flannel shirt, with burs stuck all over it, and in this condition he was carried in procession through the town in a hand-barrow. This was done to 'bring better luck' to the fishing. It happened, too, in a village where there are no fewer than nine churches and chapels of various kinds, and thirteen schools." —*Banff Journal.*

A. CHALLSTETH.—(Vol. ii. p. 142.)

By way of a set-off against the irreligious doings of the fishermen of Buckie, to "bring good luck," it may be well to put on record the custom at Clovelly (on the north coast of this county); where a better example is set, and "a more excellent way shown" for obtaining a successful supply of herrings when the fishing season begins.

The fishermen all attend a special service at the church. The 107th Psalm is substituted for the Psalms of the day. The Gospel for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity is read. The Old Hundredth Psalm is sung by all the fishermen, before the General Thanksgiving; after it, the following prayer:

The Clovelly Fishermen's Prayer.

"Almighty and loving Father, Thou rulest in heaven, in the earth, in the sea, and in all deep places; there is no creature but hears, understands, and obeys Thy voice. Thou speakest the word, and there ariseth the stormy wind and tempest. Again, Thou speakest the word, and there follows a great calm. And be Thou pleased to speak a word of mercy and comfort to Thy servants in their honest calling: still the winds — smoothe the waves; and let them go forth and come in in safety. Protect their persons, secure their vessels, and all that appertains unto them; and let not a hair of any man's head perish. They may with Thy Disciples fish day and night, and

catch nothing; but if Thou pleasest to speak such a word as Thou didst then, they shall encompass so great a multitude as neither their nets nor vessels shall contain. Let all be done according to the good pleasure of our God, whether many or whether few — blessed be God for all. Only, we beseech Thee, let not our sins withhold good things from us; and therefore pardon our sins of what kind soever: especially our murmurings and our presumings; our profanation of Thy Holy Day, and Thy Holy Name; our covetousness and unthankfulness; our intemperance and our hatred, and variance with each other. And let us make such just, wise, and holy improvements of these Thy blessings, that we may have the comfort of them while we have to live; and we, and all others, may rejoice in the loving-kindness of the soul. And do Thou make us, O Lord, to consider that we prosper more by Thy Providence than by our own industry; and that Thou canst, by one word speaking, send all these blessings to another shore, and to another people that shall serve Thee better, and be more thankful than we have been. Make us, Gracious Lord, to consider the utter uncertainty of all our lives; and how easy it is for Thee, O Mighty God, to raise a blast, or commission a wave, and dash us against a rock, and throw us from this to an ocean of endless misery. Let us therefore always have upon our minds an awful regard of the great and terrible God, in and by whom we must live: that while we do live, we may live in His fear; and when we come to die, we may die in His favour, and then partake of His glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Such was the use twenty years ago, and I was told "It always had been so." However praiseworthy, it could not of course have ever had the sanction of authority.

H. T. Ellacombe. — (Vol. ii. p. 228.)

Rectory, Clyst St. George.

SUPERSTITION RESPECTING THE TREMELLA NOSTOC.

Those of your readers who have devoted some attention to the investigation of the simplest and most minute forms of vegetable life, must have often noticed in their walks in the country a strange gelatinous substance, of no precise form; not unlike calf-foot-jelly, only of a greenish hue; creeping over gravelly soils, and occurring mixed up with wet mosses on rocks beside waterfalls. When moist, it is soft and pulpy to the touch; but in dry weather it becomes

thin, membranaceous, and brittle, and of a black fuscous colour. This strange substance was placed by Linnæus among the Algæ, or sea-weeds, and called *Tremella Nostoc* —a name adopted by Michelis, Dillenius, and Mr. James E. Smith, who has given an excellent figure of it in his *English Botany*, t. 461. By Vaucher and Agardh, however, it was removed from the *Tremellas*, which now constitute a genus of gelatinous fungi, and ranked under the *Algæ Gloiocladeæ*, under the name of *Nostoc commune*, or Common Nostoc: a name first used by the celebrated alchemist and father of chemistry, Paracelsus, the derivation and meaning of which are unknown. Many individuals are familiar with it under the ordinary English name of *Rain Tremella*, or Star Jelly.

During the Middle Ages, extraordinary superstitious notions were entertained of this plant, under the name of *Cælifolium*, or "Flowers of Heaven." By the alchemists it was considered a *universal menstruum*, probably from the extreme simplicity of its construction, as it is entirely composed of cells; which assume the appearance of crisped moniliform filaments, finally dissolved into sporules. I understand from Dr. Pereira's *Materia Medica*, that a long account of its superstitious uses is given in the *Dict. Univ. de Mat. Méd.*, tom. iv. p. 635. (1832), in art. NOSTOCH; and in James's *Medicinal Dictionary*, vol. ii., under the head of CŒLIFOLIUM. But, as I cannot lay my hands upon either of these rare works, I shall feel extremely obliged if you, or any of your readers who may have access to them, would kindly furnish me with extracts from the articles I refer to; as I am at present engaged in the composition of a work upon the "Protophytes," and should like to be possessed of all the information possible about them. Perhaps that curious and interesting work entitled *The Cradles of the Twin Giants, Science and History*, by Henry Christmas, may contain some important information upon the subject; if so, the communication of it would confer an additional favour.

I would not call attention to this curious plant, were information about it interesting to myself only; but I humbly

conceive that those who have studied alchemy, and the other superstitious sciences of the Middle Ages, would like to know something about a substance which has figured so largely in them. In order to add to the interest which the plant already possesses, I may as well mention a few other particulars regarding it. In the Arctic regions it occurs in great abundance upon the floating and fixed ice in Wellington Channel; forming masses drifted about by the winds, and affording shelter and food to myriads of insects and *Poduræ*. In Western Thibet it is found floating in dense masses on the surface of pools and lakes, impregnated with carbonate of soda. A species of it is found in Tartary, where it is highly esteemed by the people as an article of food. They send it in small boxes to the market of Canton, in China,—a specimen of which may be seen in the museum of the Linnæan Society, presented by Mr. Tradescant Lay; and Dr. M. Montague, in his *Revue Botanique*, mentions that it formed one of the principal dishes of the dinner given by the Mandarin Huang, at Macao, to several members of the French Embassy. HUGH MACMILLAN, F.B.S.E., &c.

Edinburgh. (Vol. xi. p. 219.)

Your correspondent MR. MACMILLAN, in his interesting communication on the *Nostoc*, does not mention, though probably he may be aware of, the English superstition connected with that plant.

Amongst not only the people of the commoner sort, but even amongst those who ought to know better, it is firmly believed to be the remains of a "falling star." I have, as a boy, frequently had it pointed out to me by gardeners and others, after a wet, stormy night, as such, and any expressed doubt of mine silenced at once by the argument, "It warn't there last evening; we *saw* the stars falling in the night, and in the morning we found this here where they fell." I have no doubt but that MR. MACMILLAN will soon receive plenty of information on this subject from various parts of England, possibly to his no small astonishment, for I never heard this most absurd theory broached in cannie Scotland.

G. H. K.—(Vol. xi. p. 294.)

In compliance with MR. MACMILLAN's request to be furnished with an extract from James's *Medicinal Dictionary*, relating to the superstitious uses of the substance called *Cœlifolium*, I have here written the passage referred to:

"Uncommon virtues are by some ascribed to the *cœlifolium*. The country people in Germany use it to make their hair grow. It is also accounted excellent in cancers and fistulas. A Swiss physician reduced it to a powder, of which he exhibited two or three grains, in order to lessen and allay internal pains. He also applied it externally for the cure of ulcers."

BIBLIOTHECAR. CHETHAM.—(Vol. xi. p. 494.)

WEATHER PROVERBS.

The Oak Tree and the Ash.—When the oak comes out before the ash, there will be fine weather in harvest. I have remarked this for several years, and find it generally correct, as far as such things can be.

BOSQUECILIO VIEGO.—(Vol. v. p. 581.)

I have heard the very same prophecy in Sweden, where it is said never to fail. G. J. R. G.—(Vol. vi. p. 5.)

The proverb is,

"If the oak 's before the ash,
Then you'll only get a splash.
If the ash precedes the oak,
Then you may expect a soak."

P. P.—(Vol. vi. p. 71.)

It is a common opinion in the midland counties, that if the oak comes into leaf before the ash, a dry summer may be expected, and a wet summer if the ash is the first A wet spring is generally, I believe, favourable to the earlier leaves of the ash, which are retarded by a dry one.

H. N. E.—(Vol. vi. p. 50.)

Weather proverbs are among the most curious portions of popular literature. That foul or fair weather is betokened according as the rainbow is seen in the morning or evening,

is recorded in the following German "saw," which is nearly identical with our well-known English proverb:—

Regenbogen am Morgen
Macht dem Schäfer sorgen;
Regenbogen am Abend
Ist dem Schäfer labend.

In Mr. Ackerman's recently published volume called *Spring Tide*, a pleasant intermixture of fly-fishing and philology, we have a Wiltshire version of this proverb, curious for its old Saxon language and its comparatively modern allusion to a "great coat" in the third and sixth lines, which must be interpolations.

"The Rainbow in th' marnin'
Gies the Shepherd warnin'
To car' his girt cwoat on his back:
The Rainbow at night
Is the Shepherd's delight,
For then no girt cwoat will be lack."

No one, we believe, has yet remarked the philosophy of this saying; namely, that in the morning the rainbow is seen in the clouds in the west, the quarter from which we get most rain, and of course, in the evening, in the opposite quarter of the heavens.

WILLIAM J. THOMS.—(Vol. i. p. 412.)

"Mr. THOMS" says that he believes no one has remarked the philosophy of this proverbial rhyme. Sir Humphry Davy, however, points it out in his *Salmonia*.

(Vol. i. p. 451.)

French Season Rhymes and Weather Rhymes.—

"À la Saint-Antoine (17th January)
Les jours croissent le repas d'un moine."

"À la Saint-Barnabé (11th June)
La faux au pré."

"À la Saint-Cathérine (25th November)
Tout bois prend racine."

"Passé la Saint-Clément (23rd November)
Ne sème plus froment."

" Si l'hiver va droit son chemin,
Vous l'aurez à la Saint-Martin." (12th Nov.)

" S'il n'arreste tant ne quant,
Vous l'aurez à la Saint-Clément." (23rd Nov.)

" Et s'il trouve quelqu' encombrée,
Vous l'aurez à la Saint-André." (30th Nov.)

CETREP.—(Vol. ix. p. 9.)

The following weather rules are taken from a work which is probably but little known to the generality of English readers. It is entitled:

" Contes populaires, Préjugés, Patois, Proverbes, Noms de Lieux, de l'Arrondissement de Bayeaux, recueillis et publiés par Frédéric Pluquet, &c.: Rouen, 1834."

Where saints' days are mentioned, I have added the day of the month on which they fall, as far as I have been able to ascertain it; but as it sometimes happens that there is more than one saint of the same name, and that their feasts fall on different days, I may perhaps, in some cases, have fixed on the wrong one:

" Année venteuse,
Année pommeuse."

" Année hannetonneuse,
Année pommeuse."

" L'hiver est dans un bissac; s'il n'est dans un bout, il est dans l'autre."

" Pluie du Matin
N'arrête pas le pèlerin."

" À Noël au balcon,
À Pâques au tison."

" À Noël les moucherons,
À Pâques les glaçons."

" Pâques pluvieux,
An fromenteux."

" Le propre jour des Rameaux
Sème oignons et poreaux."

" Après Pâques et les Rogations,
Fi de prêtres et d'oignons."

" Fêves fleuries
Temps de folies."

" Rouge rosée au matin,
C'est beau temps pour le pèlerin."

" Pluie de Février
Vaut jus de fumier."

" Février qui donne neige
Bel été nous plège."

" Février
L'anelier " [anneau].

This saying has probably originated in the number of marriages celebrated in this month; the season of Lent which follows being a time in which it is not usual in Roman Catholic countries, to contract marriage.

" Février emplit les fosses;
Mars les sèche."

" Mars Martelle,
Avril coutelle."

An allusion to the boisterous winds of March, and the sharp, cutting, easterly winds which frequently prevail in April.

" Nul Avril
Sans épi."

" Avril le doux,
Quand il se fâche, le pis de tout."

" Bonne ou mauvais poirette,
Il faut que Mars la trouve faite."

Poirette, in the dialect of Bayeux, means a leek.

" Froid Mai et chaud Juin
Donnent pain et vin."

" En Juignet [Juillet],
La faucille au poignet."

" À la Saint-Vincent [Jan. 22.],
Tout dégèle, ou tout fend."

" Saint-Julien brise glace [Jan. 27.],
S'il ne la brise, il l'embrasse."

" À la Chandeleur [Feb. 2.],
La grande douleur."

Meaning the greatest cold.

" À la Chandeleur,
Où toutes bêtes sont en horreur."

Probably alluding to the rough state of their coats at this season.

" À la Saint-George [April 23.],
Sème ton orge."

" Quand il pleut le jour Saint-Marc [April 25.],
Il ne faut ni pouque ni sac."

" À la Saint-Cathérine [April 29.],
Tout bois prend racine."

" À la Saint-Urbain [May 25.],
Le froment porte grain."

" À la Saint-Loup [May 28?],
La lampe au clou."

" S'il pleut le jour Saint-Médard [June 8.],
Il pleuvra quarante jours plus tard."

" À la Saint-Barnabé [June 11.]
La faux au pré."

" À la Saint-Sacrement [June 15.]
L'épi est au froment."

" Quand il pleut à la Saint-Gervais [June 19.],
Il pleut quarante jours après."

" À la Madeleine [July 22.],
Les noix sont pleines."

" À la Saint-Laurent [Aug. 10.],
La faucille au froment."

" Passé la Saint-Clément [Nov. 23?],
Ne sème plus le froment."

" Si le soleil rit le jour Sainte-Eulalie [Dec. 10.],
Il y aura pommes et cidre à folie."

" À la Sainte-Luce [Dec. 13?],
Les jours croissent du saut d'une puce."

" À la Saint-Thomas [Dec. 21.],
Les jours sont au plus bas."

EDGAR MACCULLOCH.—(Vol. ix. p. 277.)

Guernsey.

St. Vincent's Day, Jan. 22.—In Brand's *Popular Antiqui-*

ties, Bohn's edition, vol. i. p. 38., is to be found the following notice of this day:

"Mr. Douce's manuscript notes say: 'Vincenti festo si Sol radiet, memor esto;' thus Englished by Abraham Fleming:

'Remember on St. Vincent's Day,
If that the Sun his beams display.'

"[Dr. Foster is at a loss to account for the origin of this command, &c.]"

It is probable that the concluding part of the precept has been lost; but a curious old manuscript, which fell into my hands some years since, seems to supply the deficiency. The manuscript in question is a sort of household book, kept by a family of small landed proprietors in the island of Guernsey between the years 1505 and 1569. It contains memoranda, copies of wills, settlements of accounts, recipes, scraps of songs, and parts of hymns and prayers; some Romanist, some Anglican, some of the Reformed Church in France. Among the scraps of poetry I find the following rhymes on St. Vincent's Day; the first three lines of which are evidently a translation of the Latin verse above quoted, the last containing the fact to be remembered:

"Prens garde au jour St. Vincent,
Car sy ce jour tu vois et sent
Que le soleil soiet cler et biau,
Nous érons du vin plus que d'eau."

These lines follow immediately after the rhymed prognostications to be drawn from the state of the weather on St. Paul's Day, Jan. 28. As these verses differ from those quoted in Brand, from an *Almanach* printed at Basle in 1672, I here give the Guernsey copy:

"Je te donneray ugne doctryne
Qui te vauldra d'or ugne myne;
Et sordement sur moy te fonde,
Car je dure autant que ce monde;
Et sy te veulx byen advertir,
Et que je ne veulx point mentir,
De mortaylle guerre ou chertey,
[A line appears to be lost here.]

Si le jour St. Paul le convers
Se trouve byaucob descouvert,
L'on aura pour celle sayson
Du bled et du foyn à foyson;
Et sy se jour fait vant sur terre,
Ce nous synyfye guerre;
S'yl pleut ou nège sans fallir
Le chier tans nous doet asalir;
Si de nyelle faict, brunes ou brouillars,
Selon le dyt de nos vyellars,
Mortalitey nous est ouverte."

Another line appears to be omitted here; then follow immediately the lines on St. Vincent's Day.

EDGAR MACCULLOCH.—(Vol. ix. p. 307)

The following is copied from an old manuscript collection of curiosities in my possession. I should be glad to know the author's name, and that of the book * from which it is taken:

"*Observations on Remarkable Days, to know how the whole Year will succeed in Weather, Plenty, &c.*

"If it be lowering or wet on Childermas or Innocence Day, it threatens scarcity and mortality among the weaker sort of young people; but if the day be very fair, it promiseth plenty.

"If New Year's Day, in the morning, open with dusky red clouds, it denotes strifes and debates among great ones, and many robberies to happen that year.

"It is remarkable on Shrove Tuesday, that as the sun shine little or much on that day, or as other weather happens, so shall every day participate more or less of such weather till the end of Lent.

"If the sun shines clear on Palm Sunday, or Easter Day, or either of them, there will be great store of fair weather, plenty of corn, and other fruits of the earth.

"If it rains on Ascension Day, though never so little, it foretells a scarcity to ensue that year, and sickness particularly among cattle; but if it be fair and pleasant then to the contrary, and pleasant weather mostly till Michaelmas.

"If it happen to rain on Whitsunday, much thunder and lightning will follow, blasts, mildews, &c. But if it be fair, great plenty of corn.

* The Shepherd's Kalendar, by Thomas Passenger.

"If Midsummer Day be never so little rainy, the hazel and walnut will be scarce, corn smitten in many places; but apples, pears, and plums will not be hurt.

"If on St. Swithin's Day it proves fair, a temperate winter will follow; but if rainy, stormy, or windy, then the contrary.

"If St. Bartholomew Day be misty, the morning beginning with a hoar frost, then cold weather will soon ensue, and a sharp winter attended with many biting frosts.

"If Michaelmas Day be fair, the sun will shine much in the winter; though the wind at north-east will frequently reign long, and be very sharp and nipping."

RUBY.—(Vol. ix. p. 308.)

The Shepherd of Banbury's Weather Rules to judge of the Changes of the Weather, first printed in 1670, was long a favourite book with the country gentleman, the farmer, and the peasant. They were accustomed to regard it with the consideration and confidence which were due to the authority of so experienced a master of the art of prognostication, and, dismissing every sceptical thought, received his maxims with the same implicit faith as led them to believe that if their cat chanced to wash her face, rainy weather would be the certain and inevitable result. Moreover, this valuable little manual instructed them how to keep their horses, sheep, and oxen sound, and prescribed cures for them when distempered. No wonder, then, if it has passed through many editions. Yet it has been invariably stated that *The Banbury Shepherd* in fact had no existence; was purely an imaginary creation; and that the work which passes under his name, "John Claridge," was written by Dr. John Campbell, the Scottish historian, who died in 1775. The statements made in connexion with this book are curious enough; and it is with a view of placing the matter in a clear and correct light that I now trouble you with a Note, which will, I hope, tend to restore to this poor weather-wise old shepherd his long-lost rank and station among the rural authors of England.

I believe that the source of the error is to be traced to the second edition of the *Biographia Britannica*, in a memoir of Dr. Campbell by Kippis, in which, when enumerating

the works of the learned Doctor, Kippis says, "He was also the author of *The Shepherd of Banbury's Rules*,—a favourite pamphlet with the common people." We next find the book down to Campbell as the "author" in Watt's *Bibliotheca Britannica*, which is copied both by Chalmers and Lowndes. And so the error has been perpetuated, even up to the time of the publication of a meritorious *History of Banbury*, by the late Mr. Alfred Beesley, in 1841. This writer thus speaks of the work:

"The far-famed shepherd of Banbury is only an apocryphal personage. In 1744 there was published *The Shepherd of Banbury's Rules to judge of the Changes of the Weather, grounded on forty Years' Experience. To which is added a rational Account of the Causes of such Alterations, the Nature of Wind, Rain, Snow, &c., on the Principles of the Newtonian Philosophy. By John Claridge. London: printed for W. Bickerton, in the Temple Exchange, Fleet Street. Price* 1s. The work attracted a large share of public attention, and deserved it. A second edition appeared in 1748. . . . It is stated in Kippis's *Biographia Britannica* that the real author was Dr. John Campbell, a Scotchman."

In 1770 there appeared *An Essay on the Weather, with Remarks on "The Shepherd of Banbury's Rules," &c.*: by John Mills, Esq., F.R.S. Mr. Mills observes:

"Who the shepherd of Banbury was we know not; nor indeed have we any proof that the rules called his were penned by a real shepherd. Both these points are, however, immaterial; their truth is their best voucher. . . . . Mr. Claridge published them in the year 1744, since which time they are become very scarce, having long been out of print."

Now all these blundering attempts at annihilating the poor shepherd may, I think, be accounted for by neither of the above-mentioned writers having a knowledge of the original edition, published in 1670, of the real shepherd's book (the title of which I will presently give), which any one may see in the British Museum library. It has on the titlepage a slight disfigurement of name, viz. John *Clearidge*; but it is *Claridge* in the preface. The truth is that Dr. John Campbell *re-published* the book in 1744, but without affixing his own name, or giving any information of its au-

thor or of previous editions. The part, however, which he bore in this edition is explained by the latter portion of the title already given; and still more clearly in the Preface. We find authorities added, to give weight to the shepherd's remarks; and likewise additional rules in relation to the weather, derived from the common sayings and proverbs of the country people, and from old English books of husbandry. It may, in short, be called a clever scientific commentary on the shepherd's observations. After what has been stated, your readers will not be surprised to learn that one edition of the work appears in Watt's very inaccurate book under CLARIDGE, another under CLEARIDGE, and a third under CAMPBELL. I will now speak of the original work: it is a small octavo volume of thirty-two pages, rudely printed, with an amusing Preface "To the Reader," in which the shepherd dwells with much satisfaction on his peculiar vaticinating talents. As this Preface has been omitted in all subsequent editions, and as the book itself is extremely scarce, I conceive that a reprint of it in your pages may be acceptable to your Folk-lore readers. The "Rules" are interlarded with scraps of poetry, somewhat after the manner of old Tusser, and bear the unmistakable impress of a "plain unlettered Muse." The author concludes his work with a poetical address "to the antiquity and honour of shepheards." The title is rather a droll one, and is as follows:

"The Shepherd's Legacy: or John Clearidge his forty Years' Experience of the Weather: being an excellent Treatise, wherein is shewed the Knowledge of the Weather. First, by the Rising and Setting of the Sun. 2. How the Weather is known by the Moon. 3. By the Stars. 4. By the Clouds. 5. By the Mists. 6. By the Rainbow. 7. And especially by the Winds. Whereby the Weather may be exactly known from Time to Time: which observation was never heretofore published by any Author. 8. Also, how to keep your sheep sound when they be sound. 9. And how to cure them if they be rotten. 10. Is shewed the Antiquity and Honour of Shepheards. With some certain and assured Cures for thy Horse, Cow, and Sheep.

An almanack is out at twelve months day,
My Legacy it doth endure for aye.

But take you notice, though 'tis but a hint,
It far excels some books of greater print.

London: printed and are to be sold by John Hancock, Junior, at the Three Bibles in Popes-head Ally, next Cornhill, 1670."

In the Preface he tells us that—

"Having been importun'd by sundry friends (some of them being worthy persons) to make publique for their further benefit what they have found by experience to be useful for themselves and others, I could not deny their requests; but was willing to satisfie them, as also my own self, to do others good as well as myself; lest I should hide my talent in a napkin, and my skill be rak'd up with me in the dust. Therefore I have left it to posterity, that they may have the fruit when the old tree is dead and rotten. And because I would not be tedious, I shall descend to some few particular instances of my skill and foreknowledge of the weather, and I shall have done.

"First, in the year 1665, at the 1st of January, I told several credible persons that the then frost would hold till March, that men could not plow, and so it came to pass directly.

"2. I also told them that present March, that it would be a very dry summer, which likewise came to pass.

"3. The same year, in November, I told them it would be a very open winter, which also came to pass, although at that time it was a great snow: but it lasted not a week.

"4. In the year 1666, I told them that year in March, that it would be a very dry spring; which also came to pass.

"5. In the year 1667, certaine shepheards ask'd my councel whether they might venture their sheep any more in the Low-fields? I told them they might safely venture them till August next; and they sped very well, without any loss.

"6. I told them, in the beginning of September the same year, that it would be a south-west wind for two or three months together, and also great store of rain, so that wheat sowing would be very difficult in the Low-fields, by reason of wet; which we have found by sad experience. And further, I told them that they should have not above three or four perfect fair days together till the shortest day.

"7. In the year 1668, in March, although it was a very dry season then, I told my neighbours that it would be an extraordinary fruitful summer for hay and grass, and I knew it by reason there was so much rain in the latter end of February and beginning of March: for by that I ever judge of the summers, and I look that the winter will be dry and frosty for the most part, by reason that this November was mild: for by that I do ever judge of the winters.

"Now, I refer you unto the book itself, which will sufficiently inform you of sundry other of my observations. For in the ensuing discourse I have set you down the same rules which I go by myself. And if any one shall question the truth of what is here set down, let them come to me, and I will give them further satisfaction.

JOHN CLARIDGE, SEN.

"Hanwell, near Banbury."

It appears, from inquiries made in the neighbourhood, that the name of Claridge is still common at Hanwell, a small village near Banbury — that "land o' cakes," — and that last century there was a John Claridge, a small farmer, resident there, who died in 1758, and who might have been a grandson of the "far-famed," but unjustly defamed, "shepherd of Banbury." W. B. RYE. — (Vol. vii. p. 373.)

The interesting article on "The Shepherd of Banbury's Weather Rules" has reminded me of two *sayings* I heard in Worcestershire, and upon which my informant placed the greatest reliance. The first is, "If the moon changes on a Sunday, there will be a flood before the month is out." My authority asserted that through a number of years he has never known this fail. The month in which the change on a Sunday has occurred has been fine until the last day, when the flood came. The other saying is, "Look at the weathercock on St. Thomas's day at twelve o'clock, and see which way the wind is, and there it will stick for the next quarter, that is, three months." Can any of your readers confirm the above, and add any similar "weather rules?"

J. A., JUN. — (Vol. vii. p. 522.)

Your correspondent J. A., jun., invites further contributions on the subject to which he refers. Though by no means infallible, such prognostics are not without a measure of truth, founded as they are on habits of close observation:

1. "Si sol splendescat Maria Purificante,
Major erit glacies post festum quàm fuit ante."

Rendered thus:

"When on the Purification sun hath shin'd,
The greater part of winter comes behind."

2. "If the sun shines on Easter-Day, it shines on Whit Sunday likewise."

To this I may add the French adage:

"Quel est Vendredi tel Dimanche."

From a MS. now in my possession, dating two centuries back, I extract the following remarks on "Times and Seasons," as not wholly unconnected with the present subject:

"Easter-day never falleth lower than the 22nd of March, and never higher than the 25th of April.

"Shrove Sunday has its range between the 1st of February and the 7th of March.

"Whit Sunday between the 10th of May and the 13th of June.

"A rule of Shrovetide: — The Tuesday after the second change of the moon after New Year's day is always Shrove Tuesday."

To these I may perhaps be permitted to add certain cautions, derived from the same source:

"The first Monday in April, the day on which Cain was born, and Abel was slain.

"The second Monday in August, on which day Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed.

"The 31st of December, on which day Judas was born, who betrayed Christ.

"These are dangerous days to begin any business, fall sick, or undertake any journey."

We smile at the superstition which thus stamps these several periods as days of ill omen, especially when we reflect that farther inquiry would probably place every other day of the week under a like ban, and thus greatly impede the business of life — Friday, for instance, which, since our Lord's crucifixion on that day, we are strongly disinclined to make the starting-point of any new enterprise.

In many cases this superstition is based on unpleasing associations connected with the days proscribed. Who can wonder if, in times less enlightened than our own, undue importance were attached to the strange coincidence which marked the deaths of Henry VIII. and his posterity. They all died on a Tuesday; himself on Tuesday, January 28.

1547; Edward VI. on Tuesday, July 6. 1553; Mary on Tuesday, November 17. 1558; Elizabeth on Tuesday, March 24. 1603. JOHN BOOKER.—(Vol. vii. p. 599.)

It is a saying in Norwich,—

> "When three daws are seen on St. Peter's vane together,
> Then we are sure to have bad weather."

I think the observation is tolerably correct.

ANON.—(Vol. vii. p. 599.)

In Sussex a bad repute attaches to the moon that changes on Saturday:

> "A Saturday's moon,
> If it comes once in seven years, it comes too soon."

It may be hoped that the time is not far distant when a scientific meteorology will dissipate the errors of the traditional code now in existence. Of these errors none have greater or more extensive prevalence than the superstitions regarding the influence of the moon on the atmospheric phenomena of wet and dry weather. Howard, the author of *The Climate of London*, after twenty years of close observation, could not determine that the moon had any perceptible influence on the weather. And the best authorities now follow, still more decidedly, in the same train.

"The change of the moon," the expression in general use in predictions of the weather, is idly and inconsiderately used by educated people, without considering that in every phase that planet is the same to us, as a material agent, except as regards the power of reflected light; and no one supposes that moonlight produces wet or dry. Why then should that point in the moon's course, which we agree to call "the new" when it begins to emerge from the sun's rays, have any influence on our weather. Twice in each revolution, when in conjunction with the sun at new, and in opposition at the full, an atmospheric spring-tide may be supposed to exist, and to exert some sort of influence. But the existence of any atmospheric tide at all is denied by some naturalists, and is at most very problematical; and the

absence of regular diurnal fluctuations of the barometric pressure favours the negative of this proposition. But, granting that it were so, and that the moon, in what is conventionally called the beginning of its course, and again in the middle, at the full, did produce changes in the weather, surely the most sanguine of *rational lunarians* would discard the idea of one moon differing from another, except in relation to the season of the year: or that a new moon on the Sabbath day, whether Jewish or Christian, had any special quality not shared by the new moons of any other days of the week.

J. A., Jun., and all persons who have inconsiderately taken up the popular belief in moon-weather, will do well to consult an interesting article on this subject (I believe attributed to Sir D. Brewster) in *The Monthly Chronicle* for 1838; and this will also refer such inquirers to Arago's *Annuaire* for 1833. There may be later and completer disquisitions on the lunar influences, but they are not known to me. M.—(Vol. vii. p. 627.)

J. A., Jun., being desirous of forming a list of weather rules, I send the following, in the hope that they may be acceptable to him, and interesting to those of your readers who have never met with the old collection from which they are taken.

English.

In April, Dove's-flood is worth a king's good.
Winter thunder, a summer's wonder.
March dust is worth a king's ransom.
A cold May and a windy, makes a fat barn and findy.

Spanish.

April and May the keys of the year.
A cold April, much bread and little wine.
A year of snow, a year of plenty.
A red morning, wind or rain.
The moon with a circle brings water in her beak.
Bearded frost, forerunner of snow.

Neither give credit to a clear winter nor cloudy spring.
Clouds above, water below.
When the moon is in the wane do not sow anything.
A red sun has water in his eye.
Red clouds in the east, rain the next day.
An eastern wind carrieth water in his hand.
A March sun sticks like a lock of wool.
When there is a spring in winter, and a winter in spring, the year is never good.
When it rains in August, it rains wine or honey.
The circle of the moon never filled a pond, but the circle of the sun wets a shepherd.

Italian.

Like a March sun, which heats but doth not melt.
Dearth under water, bread under snow.
Young and old must go warm at Martlemas.
When the cock drinks in summer it will rain a little after.
As Mars hasteneth all the humours feel it.
In August, neither ask for olives, chesnuts, nor acorns.
January commits the fault, and May bears the blame.
A year of snow, a year of plenty.

French.

When it thunders in March, we may cry Alas!
A dry year never beggars the master.
An evening red, and a morning grey, makes a pilgrim sing.
January or February do fill or empty the granary.
A dry March, a snowy February, a moist April, and a dry May, presage a good year.
To St. Valentine the spring is a neighbour.
At St. Martin's winter is in his way.
A cold January, a feverish February, a dusty March, a weeping April, a windy May, presage a good year and gay.

W. WINTHROP.—(Vol. viii. p. 535.)

Malta.

Thomas Passenger, who dwelt at the Three Bibles and Star, on London Bridge, was very celebrated during the

latter part of the seventeenth century for publishing popular histories and chap books. His shop seems to have been the principal place of resort for the hawkers who then supplied the provinces with literature. Many of the works which issued from his press are now very rare: one of the most curious, and, at the same time, the rarest, is *The Shepherd's Kalendar: or, the Citizen's and Country Man's Daily Companion*, &c. The contents of this book are of a very singular nature, it being a kind of epitome of the facts it was then thought necessary for a countryman to be acquainted with. A considerable portion of the work is occupied by remarks on the weather, and on lucky and unlucky days: if I were to extract all on those subjects, this communication would extend to an unreasonable length.

We are informed, under the head "Observations on Remarkable Days, to know how the whole Year will succeed in Weather, Plenty," &c., that—

"If the sun shine clear and bright on Christmas-day, it promiseth a peaceable year from clamours and strife, and foretells much plenty to ensue: but if the wind blow stormy towards sunset, it betokeneth sickness in the spring and autumn quarters."

"If January 25 (being St. Paul's day) be fair, it promises a happy year; but if cloudy, windy, or rainy, otherwise: hear in this case what an ancient judicious astrologer writes:

'If St. Paul be fair and clear,
It promises then a happy year;
But if it chance to snow or rain,
Then will be dear all sorts of grain;
Or if the wind do blow aloft,
Great stirs will vex the world full oft;
And if dark clouds do muff the sky,
Then foul and cattle oft will die.'"

"Mists or hoar frosts on the tenth of March betokens (*sic*) a plentiful year, but not without some diseases."

"If, in the fall of the leaf in October, many of them wither on the bows, and hang there, it betokens a frosty winter and much snow."

Under "The Signs of Rain in Creatures" we have the following:

"When the hern or bitron flies low, the air is gross, and thickening into showers."

"The froggs much croaking in ditches and pools, &c., in the evening, foretells rain in little time to follow: also, the sweating of stone pillars or tombs denotes rain."

"The often doping or diving of water fowl foreshows rain is at hand."

"The peacock's much crying denotes rain."

There is a list given of Lucky Days, which contains all the red letter saints' days of the Reformed English kalendar. We are also informed that there are other days in each month which "are successful enough." Thus —

"In January there are three, viz. 16. 18. 26.
In February there are four, viz. 10. 19. 27. 28.
In March there are two, viz. 14. 18.
In April, there are three, viz. 13. 22. 27.
In May there are five, viz. 3. 5. 7. 11. 19.
In June there are four, viz. 10. 17. 20. 27.
In July there are six, viz. 1. 13. 19. 21. 27. 30.
In August there are three, viz. 3. 7. 9.
In September there are five, viz. 4. 8. 11. 15. 19.
In October there are three, viz. 1. 8. 13.
In November there are four, viz. 3. 9. 11. 15.
In December there are three, viz. 9. 13. 17."

EDWARD PEACOCK.—(Vol. viii. p. 50.)

"Rain before seven, fine before eleven."

A mackerel sky and mare's tails
Make lofty ships carry low sails."

"If the rain comes before the wind,
Lower your topsails and take them in:
If the wind comes before the rain,
Lower your topsails and hoist them again."

The expressions in the latter two are maritime, and the rhymes not very choice; but they hold equally in terrestrial matters, and I have seldom found them wrong.

RUBI.—(Vol. viii. p. 218.)

The following is a Worcestershire saying:

"When Bredon Hill puts on his hat,
Ye men of the vale, beware of that."

Similar to this is a saying I have heard in the northern part of Northumberland:

> "When Cheevyut (i. e. the Cheviot Hills) ye see put on his cap,
> Of rain ye'll have a wee bit drap."

There is a saying very common in many parts of Huntingdonshire, that when the woodpeckers are much heard, rain is sure to follow.

CUTHBERT BEDE, B.A.—(Vol. viii. p. 326.)

Rhymes on Winter Tempest.—

1. "Winter's thunder,
   Poor man's death, rich man's hunger."
2. "Winter's thunder,
   Summer's wonder."

R. C. WARDE.—(Vol. xi. p. 8.)

Norfolk Candlemas Weather Proverbs.—Forby, in his Vocabulary of East Anglia, gives the following as an "old monkish rhyme."

> "Si sol splendescat, Maria purificante,
> Major erit glacies post festum quam fuit ante."

Query, from what source is this quoted? The prediction has been strikingly verified this year (1855), as the late severe frost commenced Tuesday, Jan. 16., and continued almost daily, accompanied by snow and hail, till Candlemas Day (Purif. V. M.), Feb. 2., which was exceedingly fair and sunny. On the following morning about ten A.M., a thaw suddenly commenced; but on the evening of the 5th, frost again set in with increased intensity, which continued uninterruptedly to Feb. 24.; the ice on the large "broads" in the neighbourhood varying from eight inches to a foot in thickness. The lowest height of the thermometer I have heard mentioned here, was on Sunday the 17th, when at seven A.M. it stood at 10°, or 22° of frost.

We have other proverbs connected with Candlemas Day:

> "On Candlemas Day, if the sun shines clear,
> The shepherd had rather see his wife on the bier."

Alluding to the mortality among the ewes and lambs during the consequent inclement weather.

> "As far as the sun shines in on Candlemas Day,
> So far will the snow blow in afore old May."

> "The farmer should have, on Candlemas Day,
> Half his stover (winter forage), and half his hay."

> "At Candlemas
> Cold comes to us."

> "Candlemas Day, the good huswife's goose lay;
> Valentine Day, yours and mine may."

That is, geese, if properly taken care of, and warmly kept, as good housewives do, will lay eggs by the 2nd of February; if not, they will in any case do so by the 14th:

> "You should on Candlemas Day,
> Throw candle and candlestick away."

Daylight being sufficient by that time.

> "When Candlemas Day is come and gone,
> The snow won't lay on a hot stone."

i. e. the sun, by Candlemas Day, having too much power for the snow to lie long unthawed.

E. S. Taylor.—(Vol. xi. p. 238.)

I believe these prevail, with little variation, all over England. I have always heard the old Latin quoted thus:

> "Si sol splendescat, Maria purificante,
> Majus erit frigus postea, quam fuit ante."

It is one of those old sayings which it is impossible to trace to any known source. I would remark, however, that when your correspondent proclaims the striking verification of this in the present year, he forgets that, like many similar wise sayings, it applied to the Old Style; so that it is not now to be proclaimed of Candlemas, but of St. Valentine's Day. There are many other old rhymes for different days; for instance, on St. Vincent's Day, January 22.:

> "Vincenti festo si sol radiet, memor esto,
> Para tuas cuppas, quia multas colliges uvas."

And on the Conversion of St. Paul, Jan. 25.:

"Clara dies Pauli bona tempora denotat anni;
Si fuerint nebulæ, pereunt animalia quæque;
Si fuerint venti, designant prælia genti;
Si nix, si pluvia, designant tempora cara."

F. C. H.—(Vol. xi. p. 334.)

The *Penny Cyclopædia* quotes "Si sol," &c., from Sir Thomas Browne's *Works*, in which probably would be a reference to the source from which he had it. The *Penny Cyclopædia* reference is to the folio edition of 1646, p. 289. The *Penny Cyclopædia* also gives, from a French almanac of 1672:

"Selon les anciens se dit
Si le soleil clairment luit
A le chandeleur, vous verrez
Qu'encore un hyver vous aurez:
Pourtant gardez bien vostre foin,
Car il vous sera de besoin:
Par cette reigle se gouverne
L'ours, qui retourne en sa caverne."

I add the following Candlemas proverbs from my note-book:

"If Candlemas Day be fair and bright,
Winter will have another flight;
But if it be dark with clouds and rain,
Winter is gone, and will not come again."

"On Candlemas Day if the thorns hang a-drop,
Then you are sure of a good pea crop."

I had the last from an old shepherd named Balderstone, who, if similarity of character proves kindred, must have been related to Sir W. Scott's immortal Caleb. It was on a foggy Candlemas Day that he told me it, and certainly the pea crop that year was remarkably good.

My friend Mr. E. S. Taylor has not given one of these proverbs with his usual accuracy; it should be,—

"Candlemas Day, the good huswife's *geese* lay,
Valentine, yours and mine."

as, however geese be neglected, they are supposed to lay by Valentine.

Stover, too, in Norfolk, is more frequently used for litter than for forage. It is commonly said of hay when spoiled in making by wet weather, "Well, if it won't do for hay, 'twill do for *stover*." E. G. R.—(Vol. xi. p. 421.)

In my copy of Barnabe Googe's *Husbandry*, small 4to., 1577, the following is the version of the Latin lines on St. Paul's Day, in MS. by Richarde Hoby, 1582:

"Clara dies Pauli, bona tẽpora nunciat anni.
Si fuerint venti comitãtur prælia genti.
Si nix aut pluvia dissignãt tẽpora rara.
Si fuerint nebulæ pereunt animalia peste."

"Bonis et mors et vita dulcia sunt.—*R. Hoby.*"

E. D.—(Vol. xi. p. 421.)

The Plymouth Calendar.—To your collection of verses illustrative of local circumstances, incidents, &c., allow me to add the following:

"The West wind always brings wet weather,
The East wind wet and cold together;
The South wind surely brings us rain,
The North wind blows it back again.
If the Sun in red should set,
The next day surely will be wet;
If the sun should set in grey,
The next will be a rainy day."

BALLIOLENSIS.—(Vol. ix. p. 585.)

Northamptonshire Weather Rhymes, &c.:

"Rain before seven,
Fine before eleven."

"Fine on Friday, fine on Sunday.
Wet on Friday, wet on Sunday."

"The wind blows cold
On Burton Hold (Wold).
Can you spell *that* with four letters?
I can spell *it* with two."

Burton Hold, or Wold, is near Burton Latimer.

B. H. C.—(Vol. viii. p. 572.)

"*Portuguese Weather and Season Rules.*—A wet January is not so good for corn, but not so bad for cattle. January blossoms fill no man's cellar. If February is dry, there is neither good corn nor good hay. When March thunders, tools and arms get rusty. He who freely lops in March will get his lap full of fruit. A cold April brings wine and bread in plenty. A cool and moist April fills the cellar and fattens the cow. A windy May makes a fair year. He who mows in May will have neither fruit nor hay. Midsummer rain spoils wine stock and grain. In May an east-lying field is worth wain and oxen; in July, the oxen and the yoke. The first day of August, the first day of harvest. August rain gives honey, wine, and saffron. August ripens, September gathers in. August bears the burthen, September the fruit. September dries up wells, or breaks down bridges. Preserve your fodder in September, and your cow will fatten. In October dung your field, and the land its wealth shall yield. On All Saints' Day there is snow on the ground; on St. Andrew's the night is twice as long as day. He who dungs his barley well shall have fruit a hundred fold; and if it has been a wet season there is nothing to fear. No one thrives who godless drives. None in August should over the land; in December none over the sea. Laziness is the key to poverty. The usurer's gold sits down with him to table."

CEYREP.—(Vol. xi. p. 112.)

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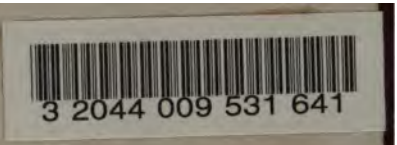

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